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**THE ADVENTURES
OF DR. WHITTY**
—
G. A. BIRMINGHAM

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THE ADVENTURES
OF DR. WHITTY**

**GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY
NEW YORK**

THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

BY
G. A. BIRMINGHAM
AUTHOR OF "SPANISH GOLD," "THE RED HAND OF ULSTER,"
"PRISCILLA'S SPIES," ETC.



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE DEPUTATION	9
II. THE PIER	32
III. MRS. CHALLONER'S PUBLIC MEETING	56
IV. THE INTERPRETERS	78
V. THE ETYMOLOGISTS	100
VI. "GOD SAVE THE KING"	112
VII. HYGIENIC AND SCIENTIFIC APPARATUS	135
VIII. LAW AND ORDER, AND THE CAMERA	151
IX. BUOYING THE CHANNEL	168
X. AN INTOLERABLE HONOUR	190
XI. MISS MULHALL'S LECTURE	209
XII. DR. WHITTY'S PATIENT	229
XIII. THE HONEYMOON	246
XIV. "LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM"	264

**THE ADVENTURES
OF DR. WHITTY**

THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

I

THE DEPUTATION

BALLINTRA is a small town on the coast of Connacht. It was a matter of surprise to every one who took an interest in such matters when Mr. Willoughby, shortly after his coming to Ireland as Chief Secretary, announced his intention of visiting Ballintra. No high Government official had been there within living memory, for these gentlemen are always so feverishly anxious to get on to somewhere else, that they cannot afford time to go to places which are not on the way to anywhere; and Ballintra, standing on the shore of a deep bay, is the end of a *cul-de-sac*. Its visitors, when they want to go away from it, must travel again the road by which they came.

"It's likely," said Michael Geraghty, discussing the advent of the Chief Secretary at the bar of the Imperial Hotel, "that he'll be taking his dinner up at the big house along with Colonel Beresford."

10 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

Thady Glynn, the proprietor of the hotel, sniffed. He did not like Colonel Beresford, who was the principal landlord of the neighbourhood.

"And I wouldn't wonder," said Michael Geraghty, "if he'd sleep the night there."

"He will not, then," said Thady. "He'll neither eat nor sleep in the town, but he'll be off out of it again as quick as he can."

Thady's opinion, given from behind his own bar, naturally carried great weight. He was an important man in Ballintra. His position as Chairman of the Urban Council and President of the local branch of the League placed him above the reach of contradiction.

"I was only making a suggestion," said Michael meekly. "It's yourself would know if anyone does."

"I do know," said Thady.

His information turned out to be perfectly accurate.

The Chief Secretary's motor-car was timed to arrive in Ballintra at twelve o'clock and to leave again as soon as possible afterwards. The Reverend Mother who presided over the convent and the industrial school was the first to make up her mind to receive the Chief Secretary. It was settled that he should stop at the convent, inspect the school, and make the acquaintance of Father Henaghan, the parish priest. The arrangement was quite satisfactory to the

ecclesiastical authorities; but it did not appear how the rest of the people would benefit by the inspection. Men looked to Thady Glynn to suggest some way of getting tangible advantage from the visit of Mr. Willoughby. Thady hesitated. He did not see what the Chief Secretary could do for him. He was already a J.P., in virtue of his position as Chairman of the Urban District Council. He did not know of any other honour or any emolument which the Chief Secretary could bestow. While he hesitated Dr. Whitty came before the public with a plan. It was not very original, but it seemed practical. He suggested that Mr. Willoughby should be asked to build a pier for the benefit of the town.

Michael Geraghty warmly supported the doctor. He was by profession a builder and contractor, and was the only man in Ballintra to whom the contract for building a pier could possibly be given. He was of opinion that a handsome profit might be realised out of the work. He spent an evening working out sums on a sheet of paper, and came to the conclusion that he ought to clear £200 at least out of quite a small pier, and might make much more if the inspector who passed his work turned out to be a fool. He called on the doctor the next morning and expressed his intention of doing all in his power to secure the pier.

12 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"It'll be a great benefit to the people of this district," he said, "if so be we get the pier. Many's the time there might be a fine catch of mackerel took, or herring or the like, if only there was some way of landing them. But what's the good of going out and taking the trouble to catch the fish when a man'd only be losing his life trying to land them at the slip there is in it, and him maybe with a wife and family depending on him?"

"That's all right, Michael," said the doctor.

"It's the most thing that would be a real benefit to the people," went on Geraghty, "would be to have a good pier. There's more lives would be saved and more money brought into the place—"

"That's all right. You keep that sort of talk for the Chief Secretary. Lay out the bodies of the drowned fishermen in the street if you like when he's coming into the town. Range out the widows and orphans in rows. Show him piles of empty packing cases that might be full of fish if only we had a pier. That sort of thing will impress him, I've no doubt. But you needn't shoot it off at me."

Michael Geraghty looked at the doctor dubiously. Then he smiled slowly.

"What you want, doctor," he said, "is to provide employment for the starving inhabitants of this town, the decent poor fellows that would be willing to work

and earn what would keep themselves and their families in comfort if so be there was work in it to be got. And with the help of God there will be work when they've given us the money to build the pier. It's the poor you're thinking of, doctor; and I respect you for it."

"I am not thinking of the poor. Don't you be getting it into your head that I'm either a politician or a philanthropist. I'm going to run this pier scheme through because, when there's money going, we may as well get our whack of it here in Ballintra as let it be grabbed by some other place. That's what I'm thinking of. What's in your mind is the profit you'll make out of the job yourself. Devil the other idea there is in your head this minute."

Michael Geraghty smiled again. Then he winked slowly.

"You're a smart man, doctor," he said. "You're a mighty smart man. I've always said it of you, and I'll say it again."

"It's not just as easy as you might be inclined to think," said the doctor, "to get the promise of a pier. There was a time when any man that wanted a pier could get it for the asking, and have it stuck down on any spot on the whole coast of Connacht that he chose to mention. But those days are past. They're getting very particular now about piers. The last

14 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

two Chief Secretaries have looked a long time at £1000 before they spent it on a pier."

"It's a damned shame then," said Geraghty. "What's the good of our keeping up a Chief Secretary at all if he won't — It's enough to set a man against the Government altogether, so it is."

"What we've got to do," said the doctor, "is to face this Chief Secretary with a deputation of the most respectable and influential possible kind, the sort of deputation that he can't possibly refuse to listen to."

"That'll be all right," said Geraghty. "There'll be yourself and me and Father Henaghan and —"

"Certainly not. Neither you nor I will be on the deputation at all. We're no use. No Chief Secretary in his senses would listen to what we had to say. Father Henaghan we'll have, of course. He'll introduce the deputation as soon as ever he's finished conducting the Chief Secretary round the industrial school at the convent."

"He'll do it," said Geraghty.

"Of course he will. He loves going on deputations. Then I'll go on to the Rev. Mr. Jackson and —"

"The Protestant minister!" said Geraghty. "What does he know about piers, or about Chief Secretaries for that matter?"

"Nothing," said the doctor. "But he'll be mighty useful to us. What impresses a Chief Secretary more than anything else is a union of all creeds for a common good object. When he sees Father Henaghan and Mr. Jackson standing hand in hand in front of his motor-car he'll be prepared to give us a lighthouse if we want it, let alone a paltry pier."

"Maybe the Rev. Jackson won't go with you. I'm told he's a queer sort of man."

"He's an excellent man. I was attending his children when they had the measles last month, and I happen to know that he's a most charitable man. When I tell him all you've been saying about the poor fellows that are out of work, and the benefit the building operations will be to them in the way of wages, he'll join the deputation at once. There's no difficulty whatever so far. The next two people we must secure are Colonel Beresford and Thady Glynn."

"Be damn," said Geraghty, "but you'll not be able to get them—not the both of them; though I don't say but you might get either the one or the other."

"We must have both, Michael, however we manage it. If we don't get the colonel, the Chief Secretary will be inclined to think that the whole thing is a got-up job, and that there's no real need of a pier."

"He might think that surely."

"He might and would. What's more, speaking

16 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

between ourselves, he'd be perfectly right if he did. That's why we must have the colonel."

"He'll not join," said Geraghty, "not if he knows that Thady Glynn is to be one of the party. He hates Thady worse than the devil. And if Thady's left out —"

"We can't leave Thady out possibly. As Chairman of all the different Boards and Leagues about the place he's a most important man. He'll impress the Chief Secretary tremendously."

"If you left him out he'd go round and rise the minds of the people against the pier, so as they'd get up a petition to have it carted away, if so be that it was stuck down in the middle of the street."

"Exactly. That's another reason why we must have Thady. We won't get the pier without him."

"You'll not get both him and the colonel," said Geraghty despondingly. "The thing couldn't be done. No man living could do it. If the colonel goes, then Thady'll refuse, for he doesn't like the colonel any more than the colonel likes him; and if you have Thady engaged, the colonel will swear by this and by that that he'll not go near the Chief Secretary — not if he was never to see a Chief Secretary again as long as he lived."

"When I say I must have them both, I mean to get them both. Listen to me now, Michael. I'm go-

ing round now to Father Henaghan and the Rev. Mr. Jackson. They'll agree all right. Just you drop into the hotel and see Thady Glynn. Tell him I sent you to ask him to go on the deputation. Tell him that I'm asking Colonel Beresford, and that I'm pretty sure the colonel will agree. In fact, you might go as far as to say that the colonel has agreed. Then come back here and tell me what Thady says."

"I can tell you that this minute. He'll say that he'll see you and the colonel and the Chief Secretary and the pier and town of Ballintra a mighty long way off before he goes on any such expedition."

"Go you off and do as I bid you," said the doctor, "and let me run this show my own way."

Michael Geraghty was back in the doctor's house in less than an hour. He had drunk two bottles of porter and a glass of whisky, but he was not at all cheered. He feared that the doctor's plan was doomed to failure. Thady Glynn had violently refused to have anything to do with the deputation. He had cursed Dr. Whitty for a meddlesome young fool. He had expressed a passionate detestation of Colonel Beresford. He had threatened to have letters written to the paper exposing the whole pier scheme as a dodge—a dastardly and cowardly plot—to seduce the League from the true principles of democracy. It was, he declared, a scandal that a

18 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

well-known enemy of the popular will, like Colonel Beresford, should be associated with a movement of the kind. Michael, who knew the power and influence of Thady Glynn, felt that there was no hope at all of getting anything out of the Chief Secretary. He made his report to the doctor.

"Didn't I tell you," he said at the end of it, "that it's the way things would be? Anybody might have known it."

Dr. Whitty received the news with the greatest cheerfulness.

"That's all right," he said. "That's exactly what I hoped he'd say."

"You're easy satisfied, then, if you're pleased with that."

"I'm going up to the colonel now," said the doctor. "Do you come in here to-morrow at two o'clock, when I'll be at home for my dinner, and I'll tell you what's the next thing you have to say to Thady Glynn."

Dr. Whitty mounted his bicycle and rode to the entrance of the demesne. He greeted the gate-keeper's child cheerfully, and then sped up the long, shady avenue. He found Colonel Beresford cutting exhausted blossoms off his rose trees in front of the house. He introduced his business without delay.

"You've heard," he said, "that the new Chief Secretary, Mr. Willoughby, is to pass through the town the day after to-morrow. We were thinking of getting up a deputation to wait upon him in the hope that he might build us a pier in Ballintra."

"Why the devil should he build a pier in Ballintra?" asked the colonel.

"Oh, we're not particular as to its being a pier. A railway or anything else would do quite as well. We only suggest a pier because it's the usual thing."

"But why should he build anything?"

"I don't know why; but, as a matter of fact — you must have observed it yourself, colonel — all Chief Secretaries build a lot of things when they first come over. I suppose they think it'll make them popular with the people. It doesn't, of course, but they don't find that out for a long time. What we feel is that if there are piers and things going we may as well get our share as not."

"Very well. If a man's fool enough to build a pier in a place like this, get it if you can, by all means. I suppose you'll put it somewhere out of the way, so that it won't interfere with the fishing boats."

"Of course we will. I'm glad you take the view you do of it, colonel, because we want you to form one of the deputation."

"Who else is going on it? I'm not going to mix

20 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

myself up with a pack of blackguards simply to swindle a Chief Secretary out of a pier."

"Mr. Jackson, the rector, has just promised to be one."

The colonel grunted. He had no very high opinion of Mr. Jackson's ability, but he was not prepared to describe him as a blackguard.

"And Father Henaghan."

"And who else?"

"You, colonel."

"Look here, doctor, there's no use dribbling out the names one by one in this way. Sooner or later you've got to own up to it that Thady Glynn is to be one of the party. I may as well tell you straight that I'm not going to mix myself up with that fellow. I wouldn't do it if it was to establish a naval dockyard in the bay. I wouldn't do it if you promised me £1000. That blackguard hasn't missed an opportunity of abusing me in the most scurrilous way for the last ten years. I'd do a good deal to oblige you, doctor, but I won't walk about with my arm round Glynn's neck to please any Chief Secretary in Christendom; so it's no use your asking me."

"Michael Geraghty —" said the doctor.

"I don't care a hang about Michael Geraghty. I suppose he thinks that if there's a pier he'll get the building of it."

"He does, of course. But what I wanted to tell you was that Michael Geraghty says Thady Glynn won't go on the deputation. It appears he cursed and swore like mad when he heard of it, and flatly refused to act."

"Did he? I'm surprised at that. I'd have thought he'd simply have loved it."

"It appears that he doesn't, though. Now, if I were you, colonel, I'd put a spoke in Thady Glynn's wheel. He thinks we can't get the pier without him. You come forward and get it for us, and Thady will be the sickest man in Ballintra for the next eighteen months."

The colonel chuckled. He was not at all averse to getting the better of Thady if he could. After a little more persuasion he agreed to form part of the deputation.

"Good," said the doctor. "We'll count on you. The day after to-morrow, at half-past twelve o'clock outside the convent. Don't forget."

The following evening Michael Geraghty, carefully instructed by Dr. Whitty, and fully alive to the delicate nature of the negotiation before him, strolled into the hotel and approached the bar. He ordered a bottle of porter from Thady Glynn, and then approached his business obliquely.

"It's wonderful," he said, "the spite that some

22 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

men has — men that ought to know better — against the people of this country and all that might be for their good.”

“That’s true,” said Thady Glynn.

“You’d hardly believe it now,” said Geraghty, “but no sooner did the old colonel above, at the big house, hear your name mentioned in connection with the forthcoming deputation to the Chief Secretary —”

“I’m not going on it. I told you that before.”

“—than he turned on the doctor, and damned scoundrel was the mildest words he used. I wouldn’t care to be repeating to you the rest of what he said.”

“Did he then?”

“He did, and more. He said there’d be no pier got without he went and asked for it.”

“Did he say that?”

“He did. And of course it was the truth. Who’d give a pier to the likes of us when the gentry says a pier’s not wanted in the locality?”

“Was it me he called a damned scoundrel?”

“It was. Maybe I oughtn’t to have repeated the like; but it’s out now, and if you hadn’t heard it from me you would from another; so it’s as well as it is.”

“I’ll teach him,” said Thady. “I’ll give him a lesson he’ll remember.”

“What’s the use of talking? You couldn’t. What does he care for the likes of you? There’s only one

thing that would vex him, and that's what you couldn't do."

"What's that?"

"Get the pier for us. He'd be mad if he heard that we'd got it in spite of him. But you couldn't do it, so where's the use?"

"I could do it if I laid myself down to the job."

"You could not. You're angry this minute, Mr. Glynn, if you'll excuse my saying so. You're angry, and small blame to you. You think you could do anything, the way he has you rose by the language he used; but you couldn't get the pier. The Chief Secretary wouldn't listen to what you'd say."

"He would listen, and it would be the worse for him if he did not. I'd have a question asked in Parliament if he didn't listen to me, and that's what he wouldn't like."

"Anyway, you won't do it," said Geraghty. "Aren't you after saying this minute that nothing would make you go on the deputation?"

"I may have said that, but if I did it was because I thought it was a got-up job with them behind it that hasn't the good of the people in their hearts. But I see now I was wrong about that. You can tell the doctor I'll go, and, what's more, I'll do my best. What time is it to be?"

"It's twelve o'clock," said Geraghty. "That's the

24 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

hour fixed for the visit to the industrial school above, at the convent, and the deputation is to meet him when he comes out."

"You may tell the doctor. I'll be there."

"I'll take another bottle of porter," said Geraghty, "the way I'll wish you luck."

The Chief Secretary and his wife, a charming lady in a mauve dress of Irish tweed, reached Ballintra in good time. Accompanied by Father Henaghan and conducted by the Reverend Mother, they entered the convent just as the town clock struck twelve. At ten minutes past twelve Dr. Whitty arrived and was cheered by the crowd which had watched the arrival of the motor-car. Five minutes later the Rev. J. Jackson, rector of the parish, came up. He had put on a silk hat, of somewhat antiquated shape, for the occasion. He looked hot and nervous. The crowd, which was in an exceptionally good humour, cheered him too. At twenty minutes past twelve Thady Glynn and Michael Geraghty strolled up together from the hotel and took up a position just outside the convent gate. Some one in the crowd began to sing, "God save Ireland." The prayer, considering that Thady Glynn was a prominent leader of public opinion in the country, was appropriate, but it was sung without any malicious intent. There was no thought in any one's mind that Mr. Glynn might be a difficulty in

the way of the Almighty. Then Colonel Beresford drove up in a smart dogcart drawn by a well-groomed horse. The singing ceased at once. An Irish crowd is always courteous, and it was felt quite rightly that a prayer for the welfare of Ireland would be regarded as an insult to Colonel Beresford. Dr. Whitty watched the scene anxiously, casting hurried glances from the dogcart to the convent gate, and back from the convent gate to the dogcart. He saw Mr. Thady Glynn start, saw him make a remark which he supposed, from the gesticulation which accompanied it, to be a violent oath. The colonel drove on. Dr. Whitty saw Michael Geraghty seize Thady by the arm and whisper eagerly to him. The colonel pulled up his horse with a jerk and sat glaring furiously in the direction of the convent gate. Dr. Whitty felt that there was not a moment to be lost. He darted forward and took his place beside the colonel's trap.

"Good morning, colonel. You're just in time. The Chief Secretary is in the convent. He'll be out in two minutes. Mr. Jackson is here, and Father Henaghan is inside. We're all ready. Jump down."

The colonel, by way of reply, jammed his whip into its socket, raised his arm, and pointed a finger at Thady Glynn. Dr. Whitty leaned towards him and spoke in a clear whisper.

26 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"I know. It's that beast Thady Glynn. He's come here to make himself objectionable, with all the corner boys about the place after him. He'll start them hooting, or booming, or something directly the Chief Secretary comes out. I was afraid he'd do something of the sort. But never mind. Father Henaghan will introduce the deputation. It'll be all right."

The colonel squared himself, as military men do, and assumed an appearance of great determination. Dr. Whitty glanced over his shoulder and observed with pleasure that Thady Glynn was standing his ground. Michael Geraghty had acted on his instructions and told Thady that Colonel Beresford had come to persuade the Chief Secretary not to give the pier. The colonel got out of his trap and stalked majestically across the road. Mr. Jackson joined him. Dr. Whitty watched the convent door anxiously. The situation was critical. He sincerely hoped that the Chief Secretary would not be delayed by any unhallowed desire to see more than the Reverend Mother wanted to show him. He need not have been anxious. Mr. Willoughby was a man of tact. He asked only the proper questions and patted the heads of no girls except those brought immediately under his notice. At half-past twelve precisely he shook hands with the Reverend Mother and stepped out of

the convent door. The colonel, Mr. Jackson, and Thady Glynn approached him. Father Henaghan left Mrs. Willoughby, to whom he had been chatting, hurried to the front, and took off his hat.

"It's my pleasing duty, sir," he said, "to introduce to you a deputation which, for its representative character, has never been equalled in this neighbourhood."

The crowd, led by Michael Geraghty, cheered loudly. Mr. Willoughby took off his hat. His wife bowed from the background.

"The Rev. Mr. Jackson," said Father Henaghan, "is the Protestant rector of the parish, a gentleman respected by all classes and creeds for his charity and Christian conduct. And I may say, sir, that in this parish all creeds live together in harmony and good-fellowship."

Mr. Jackson, hat in hand, took a step forward and bowed to Mr. Willoughby. Mr. Willoughby shook him warmly by the hand. The crowd cheered again.

"This," said Father Henaghan, "is Colonel Beresford. I make no doubt but you've heard of him before now, and I may say —"

Dr. Whitty watched Thady Glynn. Fortunately the crowd cheered again. Thady hesitated, scowling heavily.

"I may say," continued Father Henaghan, "that the fact of Colonel Beresford's presence with us to-

28 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

day is a proof that the request we are about to make is reasonable and just."

The Chief Secretary shook Colonel Beresford's hand, and introduced him to Mrs. Willoughby, who smiled pleasantly. The crowd cheered vociferously.

"This," said Father Henaghan, taking the unwilling Thady Glynn by the arm and leading him forward, "is my particular friend, Mr. Glynn, of the Imperial Hotel. A leading man, sir, in this neighbourhood, a J.P., and the Chairman of the Board of Guardians."

Colonel Beresford grew extremely red in the face. Dr. Whitty suspected that he was only restrained from swearing by the presence of Mrs. Willoughby. The colonel was before all a gentleman, and respected the feelings of the lady beside him. Dr. Whitty edged a little away from him.

"What this deputation wishes to lay before you," said Father Henaghan, "is the drawback that this town suffers from the want of a pier. It's well known that the development of the fisheries of this coast is one of the greatest boons which a sympathetic Government could confer on our poor people."

He ambled on, encouraged by the cheers of the crowd, totally unconscious of the passions which his introductions had excited. Even Dr. Whitty, who had no reason to look forward with pleasure to the

immediate future, began to wish that he would stop. In the end, of course, he did stop. All men must, even when they speak on a topic so entrancing as the development of Irish fisheries. The Chief Secretary's reply was brief but satisfactory. He said that nothing gratified him more than to observe the union of classes and creeds in Ireland. The country, he thought, had been too long divided into hostile factions. In the deputation which had met him that day he saw a plain proof that the days of division were past and a happier epoch at hand. He added that the inhabitants of Ballintra might count upon having the pier they wanted. He himself would see to it that the necessary money was forthcoming. Then he shook hands with each member of the deputation, placed his wife in the motor-car, gave an order to the driver, and departed.

"Dr. Whitty," said the colonel furiously, "you have grossly abused my confidence, sir. I trusted your word as I might have trusted the word of a gentleman. I find —"

"The man you have to blame, colonel," said the doctor, "is Michael Geraghty. Michael told me distinctly that Thady Glynn absolutely refused to go on the deputation. I had every reason to believe what he said. I did believe it. I believe still that it was true at the time he told it to me. Come now, colonel,

be reasonable. You can't hold me responsible because Glynn changed his mind at the last moment."

"I do hold you responsible," said the colonel; "I—"

"If Geraghty wasn't fighting for his life this minute," said Dr. Whitty, "and getting the worst of it from Thady Glynn, I'd call him to corroborate what I say. Look at that."

He pointed to the spot where Michael Geraghty was trying to ward off the blows aimed at his head by Thady Glynn. Father Henaghan, with uplifted hands, was dancing about on the outskirts of the fray trying to restore peace.

"Look at that," said Dr. Whitty. "Thady's pretty near as angry as you are."

Colonel Beresford had a sense of humour. He glanced at Thady and his victim, glared at the doctor, glanced at Father Henaghan, smiled at the doctor, and finally got into his trap and drove off.

In the evening Michael Geraghty came round to the doctor's house and complained of the awkward position in which he had been placed.

"Thady Glynn," he said, "was terrible angry. Only for Father Henaghan he'd have had me killed."

"You're all right," said the doctor. "I can't see what you have to complain of. You've no bones broken and you've got the pier."

"Thady'll never speak to me again in this world."

"He will. So soon as ever he finds out that you're going to make £200 out of that pier he'll be as friendly as ever he was. Why, man, it would be a terrible thing for him if you spent all that money anywhere but in his shop."

II

THE PIER

IT was about six o'clock in the afternoon of an August day, rather more than a year after the visit of the Chief Secretary, when Mr. Eccles, B.E., drove into Ballintra. He engaged a room in Thady Glynn's hotel, and then asked where Dr. Whitty lived. Thady eyed his guest, anxious to know exactly who he was and what he wanted in Ballintra. He was not a commercial traveller. Thady knew all the gentlemen of that profession who visited Ballintra, and he did not recognise Mr. Eccles. It followed that he must be a Government official. Thady searched his memory, but could think of nothing in the recent performances of the Board of Guardians, over which he presided, which would call for a visit from a Local Government Board inspector. He decided that Mr. Eccles must be an engineer, and had probably come to report on the pier which Michael Geraghty had built. Mr. Eccles repeated his inquiry for Dr. Whitty.

"Is it the doctor you want to see?"

Thady was a little puzzled. He could not imagine why a Board of Works engineer should want to visit Dr. Whitty.

"Yes," said Mr. Eccles; "where does he live?"

"If it's a tooth that's troubling you," said Thady, "you couldn't go to a better man than Dr. Whitty. He'll whip it out for you before you'll rightly know he has a grip on it. There isn't a proper dentist would do it quicker."

This warm recommendation was highly creditable to Thady Glynn. He had never liked Dr. Whitty. He owed him a special grudge since the day when the deputation met the Chief Secretary. But he did not allow his private feelings to stand in the way of a public duty. If there was a half-crown to be got out of a Government official he was anxious to secure it for the pocket of one of the inhabitants of Ballintra, if possible, rather than allow it to be wasted on a Dublin dentist.

"I don't want him to pull my teeth out," said Mr. Eccles. "Do I look like a man who'd come all the way to Ballintra because he had toothache?"

"You do not," said Thady judicially. "When I take a good look at you I can see well that you're not that sort of man."

"Dr. Whitty and I are old friends," said Mr. Eccles. "He and I lived in the same lodgings when he

84 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

was walking the hospitals and I was going through the engineering school."

Thady Glynn was satisfied. He started his guest on the way to Dr. Whitty's house and then returned to his own bar. He found Michael Geraghty there. There had been an outward reconciliation between him and Geraghty, brought about by a conviction, present in both their minds, of the inconvenience of keeping up a quarrel. Michael had borrowed, at a high rate of interest, a good deal of money from Thady Glynn, money absolutely necessary for his pier building. As one instalment after another of his contract price was paid him by the Government he punctually discharged his debt. He now stood clear of Thady Glynn's books, and was looking forward to his last and largest cheque, as almost all clear profit, to be put into his own pocket.

"Did you see the man that's just after driving up to the hotel?" said Thady.

"I did," said Michael Geraghty—"a good-looking young fellow enough. Who is he?"

"He's the engineer from the Board of Works," said Thady, "that's come down to pass your pier before they pay for it."

"I'm glad to hear it. It's time he came."

"He's a mighty sharp man, sharper than any of them that was down before looking at it."

"He'll find no fault with the pier, no matter how sharp he is," said Michael bravely.

"I hope he won't. It'd be a terrible thing for you, Michael, if he wouldn't pass it now it's done, after all the money you've spent on it."

"It would be a loss of £250 to me," said Michael. "But why would he not pass it? It's a good pier. I don't know where you'd see a pier that's better built."

"It's a well-built pier. He'll not fault the work that's in it. But you couldn't be up to the ways of them fellows. He mightn't pass it at the latter end."

Michael Geraghty was uneasy. He spoke confidentially, but there was a note of anxiety in his voice.

"Where's he off to now?" he asked. "He wouldn't be going down to the pier at this time of the evening, all by himself, without me with him."

"He's not gone near the pier, and he won't till tomorrow morning. And it wouldn't be any harm if he did, for he hasn't taken his measuring tape with him. He's gone to see Dr. Whitty, if you want to know. I'm sure of that, for he asked me the way to his house. It seems the doctor and him is old friends."

"If he's gone there it's all right," said Michael.

36 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"The doctor's a good friend of mine. He'll put in a word for me."

"You don't want him, or any other one, to be putting in a word for you, if so be that your pier's all right."

"I do not, of course. But it'll do no harm, anyway. Them inspectors from Dublin is queer at times."

"This is a mighty sharp man, anyway," said Thady. "I could tell that by the way he looked at me when I told him it would be a pleasure to the doctor to be pulling his teeth out of him. It's as well for you that he'll not be able to fault your pier."

Mr. Eccles returned to the hotel at about midnight. He had spent a very pleasant evening with Dr. Whitty. They dined together, and after dinner, drinking a moderate quantity of whisky and smoking an immoderate quantity of tobacco, they recalled bygone festivities, football matches, cycling tours, and other joys of their lost youth. Before they parted they entered into a covenant to spend their September holiday together, climbing mountains in Cumberland. Dr. Whitty could, he thought, count on a clear fortnight. Mr. Eccles, under the rules of his department, was entitled to three weeks.

Early next morning Dr. Whitty was aroused by a knocking at his hall door. He looked out of the

window and discovered Michael Geraghty standing on the step.

"If it's your wife's rheumatism," he said, "I'll not dress myself to go and attend her at this hour. It'll neither be better nor worse after breakfast."

"It's not herself at all," said Michael Geraghty.

"Has Thady Glynn been beating you again? for, if he has, you needn't come here to be plastered up. I told you last time you'd have to learn to hit back. I hate a man who sits down and lets himself be assaulted."

"There's been no one beating me."

"Then what the devil do you want? Has the baby swallowed a pin? If so, go home out of this and feed her on mashed potatoes and cotton wool."

"I want a word with you, doctor."

"Very well, say it, and let me get back to my bed."

"It's not what I could be shouting out in the street," said Michael. "It's of a private nature, and I'd thank you to let me within into the house before I say it."

Dr. Whitty's curiosity was aroused. He went downstairs, opened the door, and brought Michael Geraghty into the dispensary.

"Now, then," he said, "out with it."

"They do say," said Michael, "that the gentleman that's down from Dublin is a great friend of your

38 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

own, and that he'd do anything you asked him, whatever it might be."

"He is a friend of mine."

"And they tell me he's come about the pier, to give me the writing that'll entitle me to get the last instalment of the price."

"That's exactly what he has come for."

"Then I'd be thankful to you, doctor, if you'd put in a good word for me."

"Is there anything the matter with the pier?"

"It's a good pier," said Michael Geraghty.

"If it's a good pier," said the doctor, "you don't want me to be talking to the engineer. He'll pass it all right without that."

"It would do no harm if you were to speak a word to him."

"Look here," said the doctor, "I'm quite ready to help you, Michael, all I can. But I won't work in the dark. If there's anything wrong with your pier, tell me what it is, and I'll pull you through."

"It's a good pier," said Michael.

"If that's all you're going to say you may go home, and devil the word I'll speak to Mr. Eccles on your behalf."

"It's a good pier," said Michael—"what there is of it."

"Oh," said the doctor, "so that's the way of it,

is it? What a damned fool you are, Michael; you must have known he'd measure it."

"He might not."

"He will. I know Eccles, and he'll measure any pier he inspects. If it's so much as an inch short he'll not pass it."

"I'm not saying it is short, mind you," said Michael Geraghty cautiously. "All I want is for you to speak a word to him in case he was to fault it that way or another. It's ruined and broke altogether I'd be if I didn't get the money that's owing to me this minute."

"I'll do the best I can for you, Michael. I'll be down at the pier this morning, and if I'm able to distract his attention when he's measuring it, I will. Anyway, make your mind easy about it. One way or another I'll see you safe through."

Mr. Eccles breakfasted quietly at nine o'clock. At ten he prepared to go down to the pier. Thady Glynn met him in the hall of the hotel.

"Might I speak a word to you, sir?"

"Certainly."

"And what I say will be kept private?"

"I don't know about that. It depends on what it is."

Thady Glynn looked searchingly at Mr. Eccles. He would have liked to have secured himself by a

40 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

pledge of secrecy, but he was prepared to run some risks for the sake of a complete and satisfactory revenge on Michael Geraghty.

"I'll trust you," he said at last, "without your promising, but it'll be a bad thing for me that has to live among the people here if it ever gets out that I gave you the word."

"Don't do it unless you like," said Mr. Eccles. "I'm not asking you for any information."

"I will do it. I'm an honest man, and it goes against me to see cheating and robbery going on, even if it's only the Government that's at the loss of the money. It's the curse of this country the way men'll go behind their bargains for the sake of trying to make a pound or two."

"Those opinions do you the greatest credit."

"Michael Geraghty is a friend of mine," said Thady Glynn, "an old friend that I've known since the both of us were barefooted gossures running in and out of the school beyond. But I wouldn't let him being my friend stop me in doing my duty. There was talk one time of his marrying a sister of mine, though it didn't come off, owing to a falling out there was over the girl's fortune. I won't let that stop me."

"Don't," said Mr. Eccles. "Duty before all things, especially public duty."

"If I were you," said Thady, sinking his voice to a whisper, "I'd measure that pier. I'm not saying there's anything wrong, but if I was you, I'd measure it. That's all I'll say, so make the most of it, you."

"Thank you," said Mr. Eccles. "I should have measured it in any case."

He walked down to the pier and found Dr. Whitty and Michael Geraghty waiting for him. There was also a small crowd of men, principally those who had taken some part in building the pier.

"It's a glorious day," said the doctor. "Hurry up over vetting the pier and then we'll get rid of these fellows and have a swim off the end of it."

"That's about all this pier will ever be used for," said Mr. Eccles.

His eye was fixed on a jagged reef of rocks which lay plainly visible about twenty yards seaward of the end of the pier, a horrible menace to a boat approaching in any but the calmest weather.

"It's a good pier," said Michael Geraghty. "I don't know where you'd see a better."

"It is," said the group of bystanders in chorus. "It's a credit to the man that built it."

"Come on," said Dr. Whitty, "tap a stone or two to see that they're real and then sign whatever you have to sign."

"The stones are all right," said Mr. Eccles.

He opened a small brown bag which he carried in his hand and took out a measuring-tape.

"Surely to goodness," said the doctor, "you're not going to spend the whole morning measuring the thing?"

Mr. Eccles beckoned to Michael Geraghty and gave him the end of the tape.

"Take this," he said, "and hold on to it while I walk out to the end of the pier."

Michael Geraghty did as he was bid. Mr. Eccles, letting the tape run out of its case, walked rapidly along the pier. Michael Geraghty, his eyes fixed on Mr. Eccles, took three rapid steps backwards, dragging the tape with him. Mr. Eccles turned sharply.

"I'm not surveying the field behind there," he said. "Kindly stand where I put you."

"I didn't move a step," said Michael.

"You did."

"There's them here," said Michael, "that'll tell you I did not, if you ask them."

"I'm not going to ask them. Just you go back to the place I put you, and stay there."

Michael Geraghty went back. Mr. Eccles resumed his expedition to the extremity of the pier. As he did so, Michael gathered the tape into a ball in his hand. When Mr. Eccles reached the end of the pier

Michael had about five yards of tape crushed in his palm. Mr. Eccles gave a sudden jerk, and then, winding up his end of the tape, took the measurement of the pier. He noted the result on a slip of paper. Then he called Michael Geraghty to him, stood him on the point of the pier, walked shorewards himself, and checked his first measurement carefully. This time he entered the figures in a notebook.

"I am sorry," he said, "but I can't sign the certificate authorising payment for this work. The pier is twenty-seven feet short of the length stated in our specification."

"Your honour, sir—" said Michael Geraghty.

"Yes?"

"If you make me add another twenty-seven feet to the end of the pier I'll be broke. I couldn't do it. It's little enough I'm making out of it the way it is. I shan't have a penny—no, but I'll have a big loss on it, and you wouldn't like to be the means of putting an honest poor man, with a wife and family dependent on him, into the workhouse."

"I can't help myself," said Mr. Eccles. "You don't surely expect me to sign a certificate that the work's done when it isn't."

"It's that damned traitor, Thady Glynn, that put you up to measuring it. He's had it in for me ever since the time the doctor played the trick on him and

44 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

the colonel, when the Chief Secretary was in the town. But I'll be even with him yet. I'll —"

"You shut up, Michael," said Dr. Whitty, "and don't be making a fool of yourself. Come on out of this, Eccles. I suppose, after the way you've behaved to poor Geraghty, you'd hardly care to bathe off the end of his pier. It wouldn't be decent."

"If I'm hanged for it after," said Michael Geraghty, "I'll make Thady Glynn sorry for himself. If I don't —"

"Be quiet, can't you, Michael?" said a man from the crowd. "Be quiet, when the doctor bids you. Don't you see him taking the inspector by the arm and talking to him? It'll be all right, I tell you. The doctor'll manage him if you don't get putting the man's back up against you with the like of that murdering talk."

"The doctor himself can't help me now," said Michael despondingly. "I'm ruined and destroyed, and it's all the fault of Thady Glynn. There's ne'er another man about the town would have done a turn like that."

Mr. Eccles and the doctor left the pier together and walked towards the town.

"That hotel-keeper," said Eccles, "seems to be a pretty low-down species of beast. I suppose he had a spite against the contractor."

"Geraghty was right, then," said the doctor. "It was Thady Glynn put you up to measuring the pier."

"I'd have done that in any case. Nothing he said made a bit of difference. All the same, I hope our friend Geraghty — Geraghty's the name, isn't it? — will give him the thrashing he deserves, and a bit over. You'd hardly believe it, but he tried to persuade me this morning that he was acting out of public spirit and honesty."

"Did he, then? He must have taken you for a bigger fool than I'd have thought you look if he expected you to swallow that."

"It appears to me that you all mistook me for a fool," said Eccles. "Did you really suppose I'd certify for that pier without measuring it?"

"Look here," said the doctor, "surely to goodness you're not really going to cut poor Geraghty off without his money? You can't mean to do that."

"I am, of course. What else can I do? The beastly thing's twenty-seven feet too short."

"Come in here to my house till I talk to you."

"I'll come in for an hour, if you like, but after that I must go. And I warn you fairly, you may talk till you're sick, but you won't make me put my name to the bottom of that certificate till the pier's the right length."

Dr. Whitty set his friend down in a comfortable

46 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

chair, offered him whisky, which he refused, and tobacco, which he accepted, then he began.

"Geraghty," he said, "is a decent man, and he's done good solid work on that pier. You could see for yourself that the stones he built it of were real stones. He didn't make the least attempt to stick you there."

"If there'd been any other material in the country cheaper than stones," said Eccles, "I haven't the least doubt he'd have used it, and tried to persuade me afterwards it was stone, otherwise I dare say he's decent enough."

"Thady Glynn is a horrid blackguard," said the doctor. "He's a blood-sucking money-lender, for one thing, and has half the people in the country round in his power. He's the sort of man that the devil himself will be squeamish about making a bonfire of for fear of the smell there'll be afterwards."

"I can quite believe that. From the little I saw of him this morning I'd say the breath of him would go near poisoning any decent brigand."

"And yet," said the doctor, "you propose to back this very scoundrel, to aid and abet him in his plan for ruining poor Michael Geraghty. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Eccles. You, a member of the Government, whose business it is to protect decent people and do justice, you actually propose to do

Thady Glynn's dirty work for him and help him to wreak his beastly vengeance on a man like Geraghty who never did anybody any harm."

"What's the use of talking like that, Whitty? You know perfectly well I can't sign the certificate."

"Why not?"

"Because the pier's twenty-seven feet short. That's why. Build a bit on to it and I'll sign with pleasure."

"He can't build a bit on. He's got no money."

"Well, then, I can't sign the certificate."

"I don't see what harm it would do you to sign it. You could sign it if you liked."

"Hang it, Whitty, it's not a question of what I like or don't like. I'm simply a servant of the Government. The Government grants the money for a pier a certain number of feet long, and I'm—"

"Don't come the Government official over me," said the doctor, "for I won't stand it. What on earth does the Government know or care about the pier? I've been running the whole show from the beginning, and I give you my word the Chief Secretary never so much as asked where we proposed to plant the thing when we got it."

"I don't see what that has to do with it."

"It has everything to do with it. You don't suppose, surely, that the Government really intended to

48 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

build a useful kind of marine work in Ballintra? No Government could. The thing's absurd on the face of it. What the Government meant to do was to drop a round sum of money into the town for the benefit of the inhabitants. That's what it intended all along. That's what it tried to do, and what it would do, if you hadn't come along with your ridiculous measuring-tape and a thing inside you that, I suppose, you call a conscience, and defeated the excellent intentions of the Chief Secretary and the good men who are advising him. You think you are acting on your instructions and that you'll get credit for it afterwards. Let me tell you you won't. There's nothing a Government hates more than an official who can't see beyond the letter of what he has written down for him. All the great worries that Governments have are the result of pig-headed literalness of stupid officials. Look at the case of the king who had Thomas à Becket murdered. Did he mean to murder him? Not at all. Some fool of an official, a fellow very like you, Eccles, went and did literally what he was told, instead of considering what the king really meant. There was jolly nearly being a revolution afterwards. It is just the same in this case. By obeying the letter of your orders you are defeating the spirit of them. I've told you

what the Chief Secretary wanted to do. Are you going to take the responsibility of stopping him?"

"I'm not going to sign the certificate. If the Chief Secretary likes to pay the money over without the certificate he can, of course. I won't prevent him."

"Look at the matter this way," said the doctor. "The pier's no earthly use. You know that, don't you?"

Mr. Eccles smiled.

"I quite admit that."

"Would it be any more use if it was twenty-seven feet longer than it is at present?"

"Not a bit. It wouldn't be any use if it was a mile long."

"Would it be any less use if it was twenty-seven feet shorter?"

"It couldn't," said Mr. Eccles, "by any possibility be less use than it is at present."

"Then why on earth make all this fuss about a beggarly twenty-seven feet? I could understand your kicking up a row if the thing was ever going to be any good to man or beast, but it isn't. Except, as I said, for bathing off it's no good at all, and you can only bathe off it comfortably at high tide. Be reasonable, Eccles."

"I can't sign the certificate."

50 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"Very well. I've done my best with you. I can do no more. But I warn you fairly, Eccles, that I mean to get that money for poor Geraghty. I'm not going to see him stuck."

"All right. Petition the Chief Secretary. I don't mind. But I'll be surprised if you get it."

"I'm not going to petition the Chief Secretary or any other fool thing of the sort. I'm going to persuade Michael Geraghty to lengthen the pier. I suppose you'll come down again any time we send for you, and sign the certificate when we have the extra twenty-seven feet added on."

"Of course I will, with the greatest pleasure. But mind me now, Whitty, it must be full length. Don't fetch me down all this way if you're only going to add on six feet."

"I'll see it's right next time."

"I suppose it won't actually ruin Geraghty?"

"No, it won't. Don't fret about that. We only said that to excite your compassion."

"So I thought. And now what about this holiday of ours? Is 1st September fixed?"

"I'll join you that day in Dublin," said Dr. Whitty. "We'll cross to Liverpool, and then make our way up to the Lakes the best we can. "We'll have a great time. It's a pity I can't get more than a fortnight. I shall envy you your extra week."

He bid good-bye to Mr. Eccles at the door. Michael Geraghty, who was standing disconsolately near the doctor's house, took off his hat and bowed humbly as Mr. Eccles passed him. Then he joined Dr. Whitty.

"Did you get him persuaded, doctor?"

"I did not. I tried my best with him, Michael, but I failed."

"It couldn't be expected that you'd do anything else," said Michael. "He's a hard man that, as hard as e'er a one ever I met."

"Don't give up heart, Michael. We're not beat yet by a long way."

"It's not easy to see what more we can do."

"You couldn't build the bit on that he wants?"

"I could not. I'm telling you the truth, doctor. It would cost me more than I'm worth in the world, and more than I'd be able to borrow, and more than I'd get at the latter end if so be every penny was paid me. Thanks be to God I don't owe that old reprobate, Thady Glynn, a penny this minute. I've paid him off; but there's a bill of mine in the bank beyond at Dunbeg that'll be due next week, and the Lord knows where the money's to come from to pay it."

"You go over there, Michael, and try will they renew it for you for another three months with my name on the back of it."

"I'll not do it, doctor. I'm obliged to you; but I'll not do it. I wouldn't be able to pay it in three months no more than I am this minute, and then they'd come down on you. You've been a good friend of mine, and I'll not ask you to go security for what I'll never be able to pay."

"You'll be able to pay it all right when you get the money from the Government for building the pier, and that'll be—let me see now, this is the first week in August—that'll be in nine weeks from now at the outside."

"It'll never be," said Michael.

Even the doctor's confidence failed to inspire him with any hope.

"Come inside for a minute till I talk to you," said the doctor.

"I'll come," said Michael. "But where's the use? All the talk in the world won't get me the money that Thady Glynn has me robbed of."

An hour later Michael Geraghty left the doctor's house. His face still expressed anxiety, but the look of blank despair was gone from it. He walked down to the hotel, followed by a considerable number of the inhabitants of Ballintra, who hoped to see him commit an immediate assault upon Thady Glynn. To the amazement of everybody present, he greeted Thady in the friendliest way and ordered a bottle of

porter. Thady himself was puzzled. He realised that Mr. Eccles must have kept his warning a secret, but he did not understand how Michael Geraghty came to be as cheerful as he was.

"I hope," said Thady, "that you got your money all right out of the inspector."

"I did not," said Michael. "There's a couple of things he wanted to have seen to, trifles just that I'll be able to settle in a week at the outside. Then I'll get the money."

Thady, who knew Michael's financial position down to the last penny, was annoyed as well as puzzled. It seemed that his bomb of vengeance had somehow failed to explode. He asked Michael a great many questions. He asked a great many questions of all his customers, but he got no information which threw any real light on the matter. Michael Geraghty would not tell him anything, and kept repeating his plainly incredible statement about the few trifles to be seen after. Nobody else had any information to give.

Early in the third week in September Dr. Whitty received a letter from his friend, Mr. Eccles.

"DEAR WHITTY,"—it ran—"When I returned to the office on Monday I found that your friend, Michael Geraghty, had been paid in full for his pier. It seems that he wrote up to the office and asked for an inspector to go down and sign his certificate. They sent

54 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

old Thompson, who says he measured his pier carefully, and that it was eighteen inches over the full length. Old Thompson is a bit of an ass, of course, but he couldn't have made a mistake about a simple job like that, particularly as I had left a note before I started that the pier was short and would have to be measured before the certificate was signed. Would you mind telling me, in confidence, how you managed it? I promise not to make a fuss, and, of course, even if I did, we couldn't get the money back now. I ask out of pure curiosity. As a matter of fact, I'm glad the poor fellow has got paid. Don't waste paper and a postage stamp telling me he built the twenty-seven feet on to the pier, for I shouldn't believe it. It couldn't be done in the time."

To this Dr. Whitty replied by return of post.

"DEAR ECCLES,—I had the whole matter settled before you left Ballintra that day. It was perfectly simple, and anybody except a hide-bound official would have hit on the dodge at once. We added the twenty-seven feet to the shore end of the pier. It cost Michael Geraghty next to nothing. He had to dig down a grass bank and make a sort of paved causeway. That's all. Stones, as you said, are cheap here, and I helped him to dig the bank.—Ever yours very sincerely,

"G. WHITTY.

"P. S.—I entertained your friend Thompson to keep

him out of Thady Glynn's way. He's a decent old boy, but he punished my whisky. I had to make Michael Geraghty give me a present of a bottle when he got his cheque."

III

MRS. CHALLONER'S PUBLIC MEETING

"I DON'T think you've ever met my daughter, Mrs. Challoner," said Colonel Beresford to Dr. Whitty one day near the end of October.

"No," said the doctor, "I haven't. She hasn't been over in Ballintra since I've been in the place."

"She very seldom pays me a visit," said the colonel. "She's a good deal tied to London. Her husband is a barrister, and when he gets a holiday he likes to go abroad. However, it seems she's been working too hard lately, and has knocked herself up. She's coming over here for rest and quiet."

"She'll get them both. I don't know anywhere with more quiet about it than Ballintra in the autumn."

Dr. Whitty wondered what Mrs. Challoner worked at in London, but he was too well-mannered a man to ask a direct question.

"I dare say you've seen her name in the papers," said the colonel. "It has been pretty prominent in the discussions about Woman's Suffrage. She has

taken the matter up, and, like all women, she's tremendously keen."

Dr. Whitty had not seen her name. He seldom saw an English paper, and unless a woman makes herself very remarkable indeed, unless she gets imprisoned in circumstances of an entirely novel kind, the Irish papers take no notice of her.

"Of course I have," said Dr. Whitty; "but I didn't think of her being your daughter."

"I wish she wouldn't do it," said the colonel. "It's too much for her. I quite agree with her view of the question, but I'd sooner she left the heavy end of the work to some one else."

This surprised Dr. Whitty a good deal. He would not have suspected Colonel Beresford of being an advocate of Woman's Suffrage.

"I don't know what your opinions on the subject are," said the colonel.

Dr. Whitty had no opinions. Woman's Suffrage is not a burning question in Connacht; he had never given it a moment's serious thought.

"I entirely agree with you and Mrs. Challoner," he said. "I don't see how any man, not actually blinded by prejudice, can take the other view."

"I'm glad to hear that, because I want to ask you up to dinner to meet my daughter when she arrives, but I couldn't do it if you had been likely to disagree with

her. She's not a woman who tolerates any difference of opinion. She likes arguing, and arguments on that subject bore me."

"I don't want to argue," said the doctor. "I shall agree with every word she says, even if she goes further than I'm inclined to go myself."

"It's a pity she does it," said the colonel. "She's right, of course, in principle, but I can't help feeling a dislike for her making herself so prominent in public. Of course, not having any children, she naturally wants something to occupy her mind."

"You can't expect all women to have children," said the doctor tolerantly. "There'd be too many children in the world if they were all like Mrs. Michael Geraghty. She has thirteen."

Mrs. Challoner turned out to be a most charming lady. Her clothes in themselves excited the reverent admiration of Dr. Whitty. He had never in his life seen anything so fine as the black and green evening gown she wore at dinner. It glittered all over with little shiny discs which he discovered after were called sequins. Her figure was regal. She was at least four inches taller than the doctor, and looked quite as tall as the colonel, who of late years stooped a little. She moved with a sumptuous grace which made it a pleasure to watch her cross the room. She had large

flashing eyes, and a smile which made the doctor's heart beat rapidly. He fell a victim to her before he had been ten minutes in her company, and after he had taken her in to dinner he felt that Mr. Challoner, the barrister, was an exceedingly fortunate man.

The conversation turned at once on the question of Woman's Suffrage.

"I'm glad to hear, Dr. Whitty," said Mrs. Challoner, "that you take our view of the matter."

"I do, thoroughly."

"It seems such a pity that women should neglect to use the enormous influence for good they might have and ought to have."

"It is a pity. When I look round the women of this town, for instance, and think what a difference it would make if only —"

"I like to think of woman," said Mrs. Challoner, "not as the rival of man, not as a competitor for the prizes of the market-place, but as his comrade."

Dr. Whitty was a little puzzled. He had a vague idea that the advocates of Woman's Suffrage did want to be rivals and competitors.

"Quite so," he said. "Look at Mrs. Michael Geraghty, for instance —"

"I was thinking," said Mrs. Challoner, who generally interrupted anyone else who spoke, "of trying

to do a little work among the women here now that I am over with them. I suppose there would be no difficulty about getting up a public meeting?"

"My dear," said the colonel, alarmed, "do recollect that you have come over here for rest and quietness. It is absolutely necessary — I am sure Dr. Whitty will agree with me that you ought not to address a public meeting." He looked appealingly at the doctor.

Unfortunately Dr. Whitty, besides being exhilarated by the extraordinary beauty of Mrs. Challoner's eyes and smile, had drunk his first glass of champagne. He basely deserted the colonel.

"I don't think one meeting would do Mrs. Challoner any harm," he said.

"And besides," said the colonel, "you couldn't possibly get up a meeting of the sort in Ballintra. The people know nothing about the subject, and care less."

"That seems to me," said Mrs. Challoner, with a radiant smile, "all the more reason for having a meeting. Don't you think so, Dr. Whitty?"

"Certainly. I should like to see a strong branch of your — your —" (he did not feel quite certain whether Mrs. Challoner presided over a league, a guild, a union, an association, or a simple society) "your organisation established in Ballintra. Take the case of Mrs. Michael Geraghty. That poor woman —"

"The priest won't like a meeting for women," said the colonel; "and you can't run a thing of the sort here without the priest."

"We'll try," said Mrs. Challoner, smiling again. "I have faced worse obstacles than that."

"The priest will be all right," said Dr. Whitty. "He's a reasonable man. If he's approached the right way and talked to sensibly he'll come to the meeting and make a speech."

"He ought to, of course," said Mrs. Challoner. "The Church has always taken a strong line on the subject. We count on the support of the clergy of every denomination wherever we go."

This surprised Dr. Whitty. He had always supposed that the ecclesiastical mind was prejudiced against the enfranchisement of anyone.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Challoner, "you'll see the priest, Dr. Whitty, and talk to him. My doctor has strictly forbidden me to undertake any work I can possibly avoid. Otherwise, of course, I should not dream of encroaching on your time."

"I will," said Dr. Whitty. "I'll see him tomorrow. I'll work the whole thing up for you. You'll want women and not men at the meeting?"

"Certainly. Get all the women you can. It's a woman's question, and it ought to be settled by women. I shall have a copy of our monster petition

62 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

sent over from our London office, and, after the meeting, we can obtain the signatures of those present."

"Some of them can't write very well," said the doctor, "but we'll make their marks for them. Mrs. Michael Geraghty will come. So will Mrs. Thady Glynn and her eldest daughter, who's just home from school. You won't object to Mrs. Glynn, will you, colonel?"

"I won't have *him*," said the colonel. "Remember that now, doctor. No tricks like that deputation one."

"Certainly not. You'll be quite safe. I won't have a man in the room except Father Henaghan, Mr. Jackson—you'd like to have him, of course, when you're having the priest—and myself. We don't count. Clergy and doctors occupy a sort of intermediate position between the two sexes. We're not really either one thing or the other."

Next day Dr. Whitty felt rather less confident about the success of his mission to the town of Ballintra. The daylight of an October morning is not a good tonic for a fading enthusiasm. Tea—breakfast tea—does not exhilarate as champagne does. Mrs. Chaloner's eyes and smile were with him still, but only as a memory. Their radiance no longer made the world seem an easy thing to conquer. Nevertheless being a

man of great hopefulness, he went out and called on the priest.

"Good morning, Father Henaghan. You know Mrs. Challoner, of course."

"Is that the colonel's daughter? I know the look of her, but I never spoke three words to her."

"She wants to get up a meeting in the town," said the doctor, "in favour of Woman's Suffrage. I suppose you won't have any objection to taking the chair?"

"A meeting in favour of what?"

"Woman's Suffrage, giving women votes, you know. It's a capital thing; the Church all over the world has pronounced in favour of it."

"I'll take the chair at no such meeting."

"I'm sorry to hear you say that," said the doctor. "By taking up that sort of reactionary attitude you will be throwing yourself into opposition to the great majority of the clergy. Mrs. Challoner told me last night that everywhere she went she had the support of the clergy."

"It's different in England. England's a Protestant country."

"She wasn't talking of England. She was talking of Ireland. Why, your own bishop is as strongly in favour of it as any man."

64 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"What makes you say that? I never heard it of him."

"Mrs. Challoner told me so," said the doctor, lying boldly, "and she'd be sure to know."

"She's mistaken," said the priest. "The bishop has more sense."

"I don't see what harm it can do you to preside," said the doctor. "You may just as well do the civil thing when you're asked. We won't let it get into the papers."

"I'm against it," said the priest. "That's why I won't do it. In my opinion women are a deal better without votes."

"Of course they are. I quite agree with you."

"Then why should I be getting votes for them?"

"You won't, if you presided at fifty meetings. If you presided at one, once a week for five years, you wouldn't get a vote for a solitary woman at the end of it. Come now, Father Henaghan, it's a mere question of obliging a lady."

"What use would votes be to women if they had them?"

"None," said the doctor, "none whatever. They'd never use them. Votes aren't any use to men; so it's not likely they would be to women if they got them, which, of course, they won't."

"Then what's the good of the meeting?"

"The same good as all the other meetings. In fact, this one will be a great deal more good than most. For if you preside at it, like a sensible man, the colonel will be so pleased that he'll give you that field beyond my house for your new school. You want that field badly, you know you do."

"I have a great respect for the colonel," said the priest.

"Then you'll preside at the meeting. I knew you would."

"If I do," said the priest, "I'll not make a speech."

"You needn't. All that's necessary is for you to introduce Mrs. Challoner in a few well-chosen words, something about a charming and distinguished lady whose career has been watched with interest by the people of her native town."

"I know what to say," said the priest, "without your teaching me."

"You do, of course. Good-bye. Oh, by the way, Tuesday next is the day. Eight o'clock in the school-room."

Dr. Whitty had much less difficulty at the rectory. He saw Mrs. Jackson first. She was a lady with leanings towards culture, and an unsatisfied desire for what she thought of as a "fuller life." She was greatly interested in hearing that Mrs. Challoner was

an ardent advocate of Woman's Suffrage. It appeared to her from the short sketch the doctor gave her of the objects of the movement that it was just the thing she had always been looking out for, something that would lift her soul out of the dreary monotony of house cleaning and baby culture. She promised to use her influence to persuade her husband to attend the meeting. She went to the door of the room and called him in a loud voice until he came.

Mr. Jackson held no strong views on any political subject except temperance. About that he was violent and extreme. He wanted a Bill passed forbidding the sale of alcohol in any form, except in chemists' shops on presentation of a written order from a medical man. Dr. Whitty knew this and shaped his arguments to suit the circumstances.

"In Finland," he said, "the effect of the women's vote—you know, of course, that women have votes in Finland—has been to close every public-house in the entire country, and to make the manufacture of whisky a criminal offence."

Mr. Jackson, though his favourite study was temperance legislation, had never heard of the drastic action of the Finnish Parliament. He expressed surprise.

"I'm not telling you that on my own authority,"

MRS. CHALLONER'S PUBLIC MEETING 67

said the doctor; "in fact, I never heard it until Mrs. Challoner mentioned it to me last night at dinner. But she ought to know. She's gone into all these questions thoroughly. Her husband, as you know, is an international lawyer, makes speeches at the Hague Conference, sits on Boards of Arbitration, and that kind of thing."

"I suppose she's right," said Mr. Jackson, "but I never heard of it."

"That being so," said Dr. Whitty, "you will of course support this Suffrage movement. What we want you to do is to open the meeting by proposing that Father Henaghan takes the chair. Quite a short speech will do. You needn't say much about the question itself. Mrs. Challoner will have all the arguments ready cut and dried when her turn comes. All you have to do is to be sympathetic in a general way. You could mention, if you like, that the hand which rocks the cradle ought to rule the world; or any other little thing of that kind that occurred to you. You'll know, better than I can, what the proper thing is."

Mrs. Jackson added her voice to Dr. Whitty's, and the rector allowed himself to be persuaded. When the doctor had left the house, he wrote to the secretary of the Total Abstinence Society to which he belonged for all the pamphlets in existence which dealt with the temperance question in Finland.

Dr. Whitty walked up towards Ballintra House, intending to report his success to Mrs. Challoner. On the way he met Michael Geraghty, who, pursuing his profession of builder and contractor, was erecting a new cow byre for a farmer near the village.

"Look here, Michael," said the doctor, "I want your wife to attend a meeting in the schoolroom at eight o'clock on Tuesday next."

"Herself might go," said Michael. "But she has her hands full with the baby. I'm not sure that she'll be able."

"The baby's a girl, isn't it?" said the doctor.

"It is. It's the tenth girl."

"Then tell her to bring it. I couldn't have asked it if it had been a boy. Be sure now, Michael, you don't forget to tell her. I can't be running round the town inviting everybody twice."

"Doctor," called Michael Geraghty, as Whitty left him, "did you say it was the preventing of consumption the meeting was for?"

"No, it's not."

"Then it'll be dairying, or cookery, maybe?"

"No. It's not. It's Woman's Suffrage."

"It'll be all the same to herself," said Michael Geraghty. "Only it would be as well for her to be told, so as she'd know what to be expecting. I'll give her the message."

The day of the meeting arrived. As soon as the children had gone home, Dr. Whitty took possession of the schoolroom. He swept it out with a brush he borrowed from the schoolmaster's wife, working vigorously but not very effectively. He disturbed a great deal of dirt, but got very little of it out of the door. He arranged the forms and desks in rows, so that the audience would be obliged to face the speakers. He put the schoolmaster's kitchen table at the top of the room and covered it with a green cloth which came from his own dining-room. He placed two vases full of roses, supplied by Colonel Beresford's gardener, on the table, got a pen, a bottle of ink, and a sheet of blotting-paper. Then he went home and had something to eat. At half-past seven he got back to the schoolroom. At twenty-five minutes to eight Mrs. Michael Geraghty came in. Dr. Whitty, who was anxious about the size of the audience, welcomed her heartily.

"I ran round," she said, "to tell you that I couldn't attend the meeting. The baby's that cross I couldn't bring her, for fear she'd be disturbing the people with her crying, and I daren't leave her."

"You'll stay here, now you are here," said the doctor.

"Where's the use?" she said. "I heard all they had to say about domestic economy, or whatever it is."

they call it, the last meeting there was in it. What's more, I didn't think much of it."

"This isn't domestic economy. It's Woman's Suffrage. And you've got to stay."

"I'd do a deal for you, doctor, but the baby —"

"Sit down now and don't talk. Here's somebody else."

It was Thady Glynn's daughter, very sumptuously arrayed in a blue dress. Her hat was magnificent. She apologised for her mother's absence. Four more women dribbled in after her, and gathered in a close group round Mrs. Michael Geraghty. Miss Glynn sat on the front bench by herself. There was a noise of wheels. Dr. Whitty rushed to the door, fearing that Mrs. Challoner might have arrived before her time. He was met by six women, four of them female servants from Ballintra House; the fifth, Mrs. Challoner's own maid, whose opinions on the subject of the suffrage were probably formed; the sixth, the coachman's wife. They took their places in a prim row on the back bench, and sat very much as they did in the great hall of Ballintra House while the colonel read prayers in the morning. At ten minutes to eight Mr. and Mrs. Jackson arrived. Dr. Whitty placed Mr. Jackson on one of the chairs behind the table, and arranged Mrs. Jackson at a decent distance from Miss Glynn on the front bench. Father Hena-

ghan came next. He looked round the audience and grinned.

"You haven't got very many people," he said.

"I have not," said the doctor. "It got out some way that you didn't approve of the meeting, and so they wouldn't come. I shouldn't be surprised if the colonel refused to give you that field after all."

The priest had something to say in reply, but the arrival of Mrs. Challoner prevented his saying it. She, too, glanced at the empty benches, but she had the grace to conceal her disappointment. Dr. Whitty placed her in a chair beside Mr. Jackson. The schoolmaster's wife arrived immediately after Mrs. Challoner, and sat by herself in front of the Ballintra House servants. Dr. Whitty crossed the room and whispered to Mr. Jackson. The rector rose nervously.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I have much pleasure in proposing that Father Henaghan take the chair. I shall not detain you with any remarks of my own on a subject about which I hope to know more when I leave this room than I do at present. But I think I ought to say that, in so far as Woman's Suffrage promotes the cause of temperance throughout the world, it has my sincerest sympathy."

Dr. Whitty applauded this sentiment vigorously. It struck him that Mrs. Challoner did not look

pleased, and he wished that Mr. Jackson would express himself more warmly. It seemed a pity to rest his support of the Suffrage movement entirely on temperance. He sincerely hoped that no mention would be made of the remarkable achievement of the women of Finland. Mr. Jackson did not say much more, but he succeeded, to Dr. Whitty's gratification, in working in the proverb about rocking the cradle and ruling the world.

Father Henaghan took the chair amid loud applause from Dr. Whitty, backed by the tapping of the school-mistress' umbrella on the floor. The priest began his speech by saying that he was glad to have the opportunity of welcoming to their midst a lady whose brilliant and striking career had long been watched with deep interest and unfailing admiration by the people of Ballintra. The sentence was so well rounded and delivered with such fervour that it was applauded by several members of the audience as well as by Dr. Whitty and the schoolmaster's wife. Mrs. Challoner's face cleared. She evidently liked the priest's speech, so far, better than she had liked the rector's.

"I'm sorry," Father Henaghan went on, "that we haven't a better room in which to welcome the lady who has come to address us. This school isn't what it ought to be, but there's talk of building a new one, more suited to the needs of the parish, and more ap-

propriate to the accommodation of meetings of this sort. I think I may say that if we had a suitable site we wouldn't be long in getting together the money for the building."

He glanced round at Mrs. Challoner to see how she was taking the hint. She smiled and nodded in the most encouraging manner. Father Henaghan felt he might complete the impression he had evidently made on her by a few judicious words on the subject of Female Suffrage.

"With regard to the cause which we have assembled here to support," he said, "it wouldn't suit me to be saying too much. I'm a man myself, and in my opinion it's women who ought to look into the matter. I haven't what you call a strong opinion either one way or the other."

The schoolmaster's wife applauded feebly with her umbrella. Mrs. Michael Geraghty, noticing that the doctor was looking the other way, slipped as quietly as possible from the room. She was really anxious about her baby. Mrs. Challoner appeared puzzled and slightly annoyed. Dr. Whitty winked ferociously at Father Henaghan. He was watching Mrs. Challoner's face, and he didn't like the look of it. The priest glanced round quickly and saw the incipient frown which had aroused Dr. Whitty's alarm. He felt he must improve on his non-committal attitude.

"I haven't," he said, "what you'd call a strong opinion, but I may tell you this: if I had an opinion, it would be entirely in favour of Woman's Suffrage; and what's more, if any one among you wants a good argument in favour of women being given the right to vote, let him look at Mrs. Challoner. I defy any man to doubt that if she had a vote she'd use it well."

After this effort he felt he could do no more. He called upon Mrs. Challoner to address the meeting and sat down.

Mrs. Challoner stood up, and there was no doubt she was in an uncommonly bad temper. Dr. Whitty was anxious and puzzled. The servants from Ballintra House fidgeted nervously.

"I came here to-night," she began, "under the impression that I was to address a meeting of opponents to the monstrous and ridiculous demand for Votes for Women. I find I was mistaken. The two clergymen who addressed you appear to be in favour of what I regard as the degradation of my sex."

Mr. Jackson, who had not paid much attention to Father Henaghan's speech, woke up with a start and looked surprised. Father Henaghan glared savagely at Dr. Whitty.

"In the circumstances," said Mrs. Challoner, "I am thankful to observe that this is an extremely small meeting, and apparently quite wanting in enthusiasm.

I am glad of it. The other women — those who are not present — have shown good taste and sound sense in staying away. I do not know that I ought to address you at all to-night, but I shall say a few words in the hope that I may convince some of the least obstinate among you of the folly of the course you are bent on pursuing."

Her eyes were fixed as she spoke on Colonel Beresford's under-housemaid. The poor girl trembled visibly. Mrs. Challoner then denounced all supporters of Woman's Suffrage, especially those whom she called the "Male Suffragettes." Her speech lasted for more than half an hour. She repeated with contemptuous emphasis a large number of witticisms which had appeared in comic papers. She quoted, though without reference to the original documents, a good many articles from London daily papers. She explained that she was a leading member of an organisation of right-minded women pledged to resist to the uttermost the demands of infatuated members of their sex. She produced at last a copy of a petition to Parliament. It asked, so she informed her audience, that the suffrage should never, under any pressure, be granted to women.

"I do not suppose," she said, "that more than one or two of those present will sign it." She glanced, as she spoke, at her own maid, who had signed twice

76 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

before, "but I mean to take it round the town to-morrow myself and obtain the signatures of those who have had the good sense not to attend this meeting."

She sat down. Father Henaghan, a little redder in the face than usual, but with a twinkle in his eye, called upon Dr. Whitty to propose a vote of thanks to Mrs. Challoner. The doctor rose without exhibiting any very obvious embarrassment.

"Reverend chairman, ladies, and gentlemen," he said, "I came here to-night a convinced and determined supporter of Woman's Suffrage. So did the Rev. Mr. Jackson, so did Father Henaghan —"

"I did not," exclaimed the priest.

Mr. Jackson, who seemed a good deal bewildered, shook his head.

"You did," said the doctor, "both of you. And there's no use your denying it, because you committed yourselves in the speeches you made. But it's open to you, as it is to me, to change your views; and I may say that, after listening to the extraordinarily powerful and convincing speech just made by Mrs. Challoner, I have changed mine. The ladies who have attended the meeting have also, I feel certain, changed theirs. That is the best compliment we can pay Mrs. Challoner to-night, and by way of showing that it's not a mere empty form of words, I propose that every

one here signs the petition which has been laid on the table before the chairman."

He sat down. Father Henaghan rose at once.

"Ladies," he said, "let each one of you step forward and sign the petition, and let nobody leave the room till that's done."

"I don't want people to sign against their will," said Mrs. Challoner. "If there's any woman here who sincerely believes —"

"There isn't," said Father Henaghan.

"There is not," said the doctor with emphasis. "I know them all well, and there isn't one that sincerely believes votes would be the slightest use to her, if she had them given out free by the stone, the same as the Congested Districts Board would give potatoes."

The petition was signed. Mrs. Challoner, who went back to London early in November, parted with Dr. Whitty on terms of the warmest friendship. She afterwards spoke of him as a singularly open-minded man, one of the very few who are ready to surrender an opinion when it is clearly shown to be wrong.

IV

THE INTERPRETERS

AT the end of January, after three weeks of violently stormy weather, the American bark *Kentucky* went ashore at Carrigwee, the headland which guards the northern end of Ballintra Bay. She struck first on some rocks a mile from the shore, drifted over them and among them, and was washed up, frightfully shattered, on the mainland. The captain and the crew were saved, and made their way into the town of Ballintra. They were dispatched thence to Liverpool, all of them except one sailor, a fore-castle hand, whose right leg had been broken by a falling spar. This man was brought into Ballintra in a cart by Michael Geraghty, and taken to the workhouse hospital. He arrived in a state of complete collapse, and Dr. Whitty was sent for at once.

The sailor turned out to be a man of great strength and vigour. He recovered from the effects of the long exposure rapidly, had his leg set, and was made as comfortable as the combined efforts of the whole workhouse hospital staff could make him. Then it

was noticed that he did not speak to anyone, and was apparently unable to understand a word that was said to him. The master of the workhouse, after a consultation with the matron and the nurse, came to the conclusion that he must be a foreigner. Dr. Whitty was sent for again and the fact reported to him.

"I was thinking," said the master, "that you might be able to speak to him, doctor, so as he'd be able to understand what you said."

"Well, I can't," said the doctor. "I'm not a professional interpreter, but I don't see that it much matters whether you're able to talk to him or not. Give him his food. He'll understand the meaning of a cup of tea when it's offered him, whatever language he's accustomed to speak. That's all you need care about. As a matter of fact, he'll be just as well off without having you and the nurse and the matron sitting on the end of his bed and gossiping with him all day long."

"What's troubling me," said the master, "is that I've no way of finding out what religion he is."

"I don't see," said the doctor, "that his religion matters in the least to us. He's not going to die."

"I know that. But I have to enter his religion in the book. It's the rule that the religion of every inmate of the house or the hospital must be entered, and I'll get into trouble after if I don't do it."

"Well," said the doctor, "there's no use asking me about it. I can't talk to him any better than you can, and there isn't any way of telling by the feel of a man's leg whether he's a Catholic or a Protestant."

"That may be," said the master, who disliked this sort of flippant materialism, "but if I was to enter him down as a Catholic, and it turned out after that he was a Protestant, there'd be a row I'd never hear the end of; and if I was to have him down as a Protestant, and him being a Catholic all the time, there'd be a worse row."

Dr. Whitty was a good-natured man, and was always ready to help anyone who was in a difficulty. He felt for the master of the workhouse. He also had a natural taste for solving difficult problems, and the question of the sailor's religion attracted him.

"Tell me this, now," he said. "Had he any kind of a Prayer Book or a religious emblem of any sort on him when you were taking the clothes off him?"

"Not one. I looked myself, and the nurse went through his pockets after. Barring a lump of ship's tobacco and an old knife there wasn't a thing on him."

"That's not much use to us," said the doctor. "I never heard of a religion yet that forbid the use of tobacco or objected to people carrying penknives. If you'd found a bottle of whisky on him, now, it might

have helped us. We'd have known then that he wasn't a Mohammedan."

"What'll I do at all?"

"I'll tell you what it is," said the doctor. "I'll go round the town and I'll collect all the people in that can speak any language besides English. I'll bring them up here and let them try him one by one. It'll be a queer thing if we can't find somebody that will be able to make him understand a simple question."

Dr. Whitty called first at the Imperial Hotel and had an interview with Lizzie Glynn.

"Lizzie," he said, "you've had a good education at one of the most expensive convents in Ireland. Isn't that a fact?"

"It is," she said. "And I took a prize one time for playing the piano."

"It's not piano-playing that I expect from you now," said the doctor, "but languages. You speak French, of course?"

"I learned it," said Lizzie, "but I wouldn't say I could talk it very fast."

"Never mind how slow you go," said the doctor, "so long as you get it out in the end. Are you good at German?"

"I didn't learn German."

"Italian?"

82 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"There was one of the sisters that knew Italian," said Lizzie, "but it wasn't taught regular."

"Russian? Spanish? Dutch?"

Lizzie shook her head.

"That's a pity. Never mind. I'll put you down for French, anyway. I'll take you up with me to the workhouse hospital at six o'clock this evening. I want you to speak French to a man that's there, one of the sailors out of the ship that was wrecked."

"I mightn't be fit," said Lizzie doubtfully.

"Oh yes, you will. Just look up the French for religion before you start, and get off the names of the principal kinds of religion in that language. All you have to do is to ask the man, 'What is your religion?' and then understand whatever it is he says to you by way of an answer."

Dr. Whitty next called on Mr. Jackson and explained the situation to him. The rector, rather unwillingly, offered French, and seemed relieved when he was told that that language was already provided for.

"I thought," said the doctor, "that you'd be sure to know Greek."

"I do," said the rector, "but not modern Greek."

"Is there much difference?"

"I don't know. I fancy there is."

"Well, look here, come up and try the poor fellow

with ancient Greek. I expect he'll understand it if you talk slowly. All we want to get out of him is whether he's a Protestant or a Catholic."

"If he's Greek at all," said the rector, "he'll probably not be either the one or the other."

"He's got to be one or the other while he's here. He can choose whichever happens to be the nearest thing to his own religion, whatever that is. Does Mrs. Jackson know Italian or Spanish?"

"No. I rather think she learned German at school, but I expect—"

"Capital. I'll put her down for German."

"I'm sure she's forgotten it now."

"Never mind. She can brush it up. There's not much wanted, and she has till six o'clock this evening. I shall count on you both. Good-bye."

"By the way, doctor," said Mr. Jackson on the doorstep, "now I come to think of it, I don't believe there's a word in ancient Greek for Protestant."

"There must be. It's one of the most important and useful words in any language. How could the ancient Greeks possibly have got on without it?"

"There isn't. I'm perfectly sure there isn't."

"That's awkward. But never mind, you'll be able to get round it with some kind of paraphrase. After all, we can't leave the poor fellow without the consolations of religion in some form. Good-bye."

84 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"And — and — Catholic in ancient Greek will mean something quite different, not in the least what it means now."

The doctor was gone. Mr. Jackson went back to his study, and spent two hours wrestling with the contents of a lexicon. He arrived at the workhouse in the evening with a number of cryptic notes, the words lavishly accented, written down on small slips of paper.

Father Henaghan was the next person whom Dr. Whitty visited. At first he absolutely declined to help.

"The only language I could make any shift at speaking," he said, "is Latin. And that would be no use to you. There isn't one sailor out of every thousand, outside of the officers of the Royal Navy, that would know six words of Latin."

"They tell me," said the doctor, "that there's no great difference between Latin and Spanish or Italian. Anyone that knows the one will make a pretty good push at understanding the others."

"Whoever told you that told you a lie," said the priest; "and, anyway, I'm not going near that man until I'm sure he's a Catholic."

"Don't be hard-hearted, Father. Think of the poor fellow lying there and not being able to tell any of us what religion he belongs to."

"I'll tell you why I won't go," said the priest. "There was one time when I was a curate in Dublin I used to be attending one of the hospitals. People would be brought in suffering from accidents and dying, and you wouldn't know what they were, Catholic or Protestant. I got into the way of anointing them all while they were unconscious, feeling it could do them no harm, even if they were Protestants. Well, one day I anointed a poor fellow that they told me was dying. What did he do but recover? It turned out then that he was a Protestant, and, what's more, an Orangeman, and when he heard what was done he gave me all sorts of abuse. He said his mother wouldn't rest easy in her grave when she heard of it, and more talk of the same kind."

"This is quite a different sort of case," said the doctor. "This man's not dying or the least likely to die."

"I'll not go near him," said the priest.

"I'm sorry to hear you say that, Father. The Rev. Mr. Jackson is coming up, and he's prepared to ask the man what religion he is in ancient Greek—ancient Greek, mind you, no less. It wouldn't be a nice thing to have it said about the town that the Protestant minister could talk ancient Greek and that you weren't fit to say a few words in Latin. Come now,

Father Henaghan, for the credit of the Church say you'll do it."

This last argument weighed greatly with the priest. Dr. Whitty saw his advantage and pressed the matter home.

"I'll put you down," he said, "for Spanish and Italian."

"You may put me down if you like, but I tell you he won't know a word I speak to him."

"Try him," said the doctor.

"I'll not be making a public fool of myself to please you," said the priest. "If I do it at all I'll have no one with me in the room at the time, mind that now."

"Not a soul. You shall have him all to yourself. To tell the truth, I expect everybody will feel the same as you do about that. The Rev. Mr. Jackson didn't seem very keen on showing off his ancient Greek."

Colonel Beresford, when Dr. Whitty called on him, confessed to a slight, a very slight acquaintance with the Russian language.

"I took it up," he said, "a long time ago when I was stationed in Edinburgh. There was a Russian scare on at the time and everybody thought there was going to be war. I happened to hear that there were a couple of Russian medical students in the university, and I thought if I picked up a little of the language

I might fall in for a staff appointment. I've nearly forgotten it all now, and I didn't make any special study of religious terms at the time, but I'll do the best I can for you. You've got all the other languages, you say."

"I think so. I have"—the doctor took a list from his pocket—"French, Miss Lizzie Glynn. She was educated at a first-rate convent, and speaks French fluently. Greek (ancient and modern), the Rev. Mr. Jackson, German and allied tongues, Mrs. Jackson. Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, Father Henaghan. That, with your Russian, makes a tolerably complete list."

"I'd no idea," said the colonel, "that we were such a polyglot people in Ballintra. By the way, you haven't got Norwegian."

"No," said the doctor, "I haven't, and when you come to think of it, a sailor is more likely to be that, or a Swede, than anything else. Can you speak it?"

"Not a word."

"Do you happen to have a dictionary, Norwegian or Swedish, in the house?"

"No."

"That's a pity. I'd have tried to work it up a little myself if you had."

"All I have," said the colonel, "is a volume of Ibsen's plays."

88 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"Give me that," said the doctor, "and I'll do my best."

"It's only a translation."

"Never mind. I'll pick up something out of it that may be useful. I have two hours before me. Do you mind lending it to me?"

Dr. Whitty went home with a copy of a translation of *Rosmersholme*, *Ghosts*, and *The Enemy of Society*.

At six o'clock the whole party of linguists assembled in the private sitting-room of the master of the workhouse. Dr. Whitty gave them a short address of an encouraging kind, pointing out that in performing an act of charity they were making the best possible use of the education they had received. He then politely asked Mrs. Jackson if she would like to visit the foreigner first. She did not seem anxious to push herself forward. Her German, she confessed, was weak; and she hoped that if she was reserved until the last the man might possibly recognise one of the other languages before her turn came. Everybody else, it turned out, felt very much as Mrs. Jackson did. In the end Dr. Whitty decided the order of precedence by drawing lots. The colonel, accepting loyally the decision of destiny, went first and returned with the news that the sailor showed no sign of being able to understand Russian. Lizzie Glynn

went next and was no more fortunate with her French.

"I'm not sure," she said, "did I speak it right. But, right or wrong, he didn't know a word I said to him."

Mr. Jackson arranged his notes carefully and was conducted by the doctor to the ward. He too returned without having made himself intelligible.

"I knew I should be no use," he said. "I expect modern Greek is quite different from the language I know."

Father Henaghan's Latin was a complete failure. He seemed irritated and reported very unfavourably of the intelligence of the patient.

"It's my belief," he said, "that the man's mind's gone. He must have got a crack on the head somehow, as well as breaking his leg, and had the sense knocked out of him. He looks to me like a man who'd understand well enough when you talked to him if he had his right mind."

This view of the sailor's condition made Mrs. Jackson nervous. She said she had no experience of lunatics and disliked being brought into contact with them. She wanted to back out of her promise to ask the necessary question in German. In the end she consented to go, but only if her husband was allowed to accompany her. She was back again in five

minutes, and said definitely that the man knew no German whatever.

"Now," said the colonel, "it's your turn, doctor. Go at him with your Norwegian."

"The fact is," said the doctor, "that, owing to the three plays you lent me being merely translations, I've only been able to get a hold of one Norwegian word. However, as it happens, it is an extremely useful word in this particular case. The Norwegian for a clergyman," he said triumphantly, "is 'Pastor.' What's more, I've got a hold of the name of one of their clergy. If this man is a Norwegian, and has been in the habit of going to the theatre, I expect he'll know all about Pastor Manders."

"It's clever of you to have fished that out of the book I lent you," said the colonel, "but I don't quite see how it will help you to find out whether our friend with the broken leg is a Protestant or a Roman Catholic."

"It will help if it's worked properly, if it's worked the way I mean to work it, that is to say, if the man is a Norwegian, and I don't see what else he can be."

"He might be a Turk," said Father Henaghan.

"No, he couldn't. I tried him with half a glass of whisky this morning and he simply lapped it up. If he had been a Turk the smell of it would have turned him sick. We may fairly assume that he is,

as I say, a Norwegian, and if he is I'll get at him. I shall want you, Father Henaghan, and you, Mr. Jackson, to come with me."

"I've been twice already," said Mr. Jackson. "Do you really think it necessary for me—"

"I shan't ask you to speak another word of ancient Greek," said the doctor. "You needn't do anything except stand where I put you and look pleasant."

He took the priest and the rector, seizing each by an arm, and swept them with him along the corridor to the ward in which the injured sailor lay. He set them one on each side of the bed, and stood at the foot of it himself. The sailor stared first at the priest and next at the rector. Then he looked the doctor straight in the face and his left eyelid twitched slightly. Dr. Whitty felt almost certain that he winked; but there was clearly no reason why he should wink with any malicious intent, so he put the motion down to some nervous affection.

"Pastor," said the doctor, in a loud, clear tone, pointing to Father Henaghan.

The sailor looked vacantly at the priest.

"Pastor," said the doctor again, indicating Mr. Jackson with his finger.

The sailor turned his head and looked at Mr. Jackson, but there was no sign of intelligence on his face.

94 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

could speak Irish he'd be sure to be able to speak English."

"Would you have any objection to my saying a few words to him, doctor?"

"Not the least in the world. If you've nothing particular to do, go up there and tell the master I sent you."

An hour later Michael Geraghty reappeared at the doctor's door. He was grinning broadly and seemed pleased with himself.

"Well, Michael, did you make him speak?"

"I didn't like to say a word to you, doctor, till I made sure, for fear of what I might be bringing some kind of trouble on the wrong man; but as soon as ever I seen that fellow put into my cart beyond at Carrigwee, I said to myself: 'You're mighty like poor Affy Hynes that's gone, only a bit older.' I took another look at him as we were coming along the road, and says I, 'If Affy Hynes is alive this minute you're him.' You'll recollect, doctor, that the poor fellow couldn't speak at the time, by reason of the cold that was on him and the broken leg and all the hardship he'd been through. Well, looking at him off and on till I got to the workhouse I came to be pretty near certain that it was either Affy Hynes or a twin brother of his; and Mrs. Hynes, the mother,

that's dead this ten years, never had but the one son."

"And who was Affy Hynes?"

"It was before your time, of course, and before Father Henaghan was parish priest; but the colonel would know who I mean." Michael sank his voice to an impressive whisper. "Affy Hynes was the boy that the police was out after in the bad times, wanting to have him hanged on account of the way that the bailiff was shot. But he made off, and none of us ever knew where he went to, though they did say that it might be to an uncle of his that was in America."

"Did he murder the bailiff?"

"He did not; nor I don't believe he knew who did, though he might."

"Then what did he run away for?"

"For fear they'd hang him," said Michael Geraghty. "Amn't I just after telling you?"

"Go on," said the doctor.

"Well, when Affy came to himself after all the hardship he had it wasn't long before he found out the place he was in. 'It's Ballintra,' says he to himself, 'or it's mighty like it.' There did be a great dread on him then that the police would be out after him again and have him took, and, says he, into him-

self like, so as no one would hear him, 'I'll let on I can't understand a word they say to me, so as they won't know my voice, anyway.' And so he did; but he went very near laughing one time when you had the priest and the minister, one on each side of him, and 'Pastor,' says you —"

"Never mind that part," said the doctor.

"If it's displeasing to you to hear about it I'll not say another word. Only, I'd be thankful if you'd tell me why you called the both of them Manders. It's what Affy was saying to me this minute: 'Michael,' says he, 'is Manders the name that's on the priest that's in the parish presently?' 'It is not,' I says, 'but Henaghan.' 'That's queer,' said he. 'Is it Manders they call the minister?' 'It is not,' I says; 'it's Jackson. There never was one in the place of the name of Manders, priest or minister.' 'That's queer,' says he, 'for the doctor called both the two of them Manders.'"

"So he understood every word we said to him all the time?" said the doctor.

"Not the whole of it, nor near the whole," said Michael Geraghty. "He's been about the world a deal, being a sailor, and he said he could make out what Miss Glynn was saying pretty well, and he knew the minister's lady was talking Dutch, though he couldn't tell what she was saying, for it wasn't

just the same Dutch as he'd been accustomed to hearing. The colonel made a middling good offer at the Russian. Affy was a year one time up in them parts, and he knows; but he said he'd be damned if he could make any kind of a guess at what either the priest or the minister was at, and he told me to be sure and ask you what they were talking, because he'd like to know."

"I'll go up and see him myself," said the doctor.

"If you speak the Irish to him he'll answer you," said Michael.

"I will, if he likes," said the doctor. "But why won't he speak English?"

"There's a sort of dread on him," said Michael Geraghty. "I think he'd be more willing to trust you if you'd speak to him in the Irish, it being all one to you. He bid me say to you, and it's a good job I didn't forget it, that if so be he was dying, you might tell Father Henaghan he's a Catholic, the way he'd attend on him; but if he's to live, he'd as soon no one but yourself and me knew he was in the place."

Dr. Whitty went up to the workhouse, turned the nurse out of the ward, and sat down beside Affy Hynes.

"Tell me this now," he said, "why didn't you let me know who you were? I wouldn't have told on you."

"I was sorry after that I didn't," said Affy, "when I seen all the trouble that I put you to. It was too much altogether fetching the ladies and gentlemen up here to be speaking to the like of me. It's what never happened to me before, and I'm sorry you were bothered."

"Why didn't you tell me then?"

"Sure, I did my best. Did you not see me winking at you twice, when you had the priest and the minister in with me, as much as to say: 'Doctor, if I thought I could trust you I'd tell you the truth this minute.' I made full sure you'd understand what it was I was meaning the second time, even if you didn't at the first go-off."

"That's not what I gathered from your wink at all," said the doctor. "I thought you'd got some kind of a nervous affection of the eye."

"It's a queer thing now," said Affy, "that the two of them reverend gentlemen should have the same name, and that Manders."

"We'll drop that subject," said the doctor.

"We will, of course, if it's pleasing to you. But it is queer all the same, and I'd be glad if I knew the reason of it, for it must be mighty confusing for the people of this place, both Catholic and Protestant. Tell me now, doctor, is there any fear that I might be took by the police?"

"Not a bit. That affair of yours, whatever it was, is blown over long ago."

"Are you certain of that?"

"I am."

"Then as soon as I'm fit I'll take a bit of a stroll out and look at the old place. I'd like to see it again. Many's the time I've said to myself, me being maybe in some faraway country at the time, 'I'd like to see Ballintra again, and the house where my mother lived, and the bohireen that the asses does be going along into the bog when the turf's brought home.' Is it there yet?"

"I expect it is," said the doctor.

"God is good," said Affy. "It's little ever I expected to set eyes on it."

V

THE ETYMOLOGISTS

"I DON'T know what right he thinks he has to do it," said Colonel Beresford, "but every time Hosty meets me he asks some favour or other of me."

He had returned from a short visit to Dublin and stood outside the Court House after the Petty Sessions were over. He was talking to Dr. Whitty.

"Last time I met him was the day I was going over to London to see my daughter in April. He palmed off a niece of his on me then, a creature that was going back to school, who sat on top of me the whole way from Holyhead to Euston."

"You speak figuratively, of course," said the doctor. "No respectable niece—"

"The time before that he had an army pensioner whom he wanted me to take on as gatekeeper. I told him I had more gatekeepers already than I had gates; but he bothered on at me for nearly an hour. Once before he dragged me to a concert to hear a musical protégé of his. That cost me ten and sixpence, and I was frightfully bored."

"Sir Clement Hosty," said the doctor, "appears to be a man of varied interests in life."

"You'll say that more emphatically when you hear the last thing he did. I was lunching in the club the day before yesterday, and as soon as I entered the room I caught sight of Hosty. I sat down as far away from him as I could, of course, and I thought he wouldn't see me. Unfortunately, he did. I had no sooner lit my cigarette in the hall afterwards than he came bounding up to me. You know the way he walks."

"No, I don't. I've never seen him."

"Well, he's a stoutish man and short. He's also surprisingly energetic, and he gets over the ground like a tennis ball on a dry day. He grabbed me at once and said he wanted me to do the civil thing to a Professor Bernstein who was coming down to this neighbourhood with two assistant etymologists. They're sent out by the Royal Society to make a scientific survey of this county."

"You're sure he said etymologists?"

"Quite," said the colonel. "Hosty always shouts so that you can't pretend not to hear what he's saying, even if you're quite a long way off. Now, what sort of civility would an etymologist expect, do you think?"

"Lunch, for one thing," said the doctor. "All

scientific men eat largely, you know. And whatever help you can give him in his pursuit."

"I don't know anything about etymology," said the colonel. "It's words, isn't it? not insects."

"Yes; the science of the origin of human speech, and the relationship of the words that are in one language to other words that are in other languages which don't sound a bit like them. There's a thing called Grimm's Law which lies at the base of the whole concern. It shows that whenever a German is inclined to say 'k' an Englishman naturally wants to say 'd,' or something else of the same sort."

"I sympathise a good deal with the Englishman. But what's the good of coming down here to study that sort of thing? There are no Germans here, and I don't believe there are two dozen Englishmen within a radius of ten miles of us."

"I expect," said the doctor, "that they're after Irish. It's perfectly amazing the interest German professors take—you said he was a German, didn't you?"

"No, I didn't. I don't know what he is. All I said was that his name is Bernstein."

"Then he must be a German, and, if so, he's almost certain to be studying Irish. In that case he hasn't come to an absolutely first-rate place, but still we can manage to collect a few people for him who

“speak the language pretty fluently. When does he arrive?”

“Next Tuesday,” said the colonel. “He leaves the same day, I’m thankful to say.”

“Very well,” said Dr. Whitty. “You order sauer kraut and lager beer for luncheon. I’ll arrange the rest, and you may rely on me to see that they get enough Irish to last them for the afternoon, anyhow.”

“What do you mean to do?”

“I shall collect half a dozen old people who speak nothing else,” said Dr. Whitty, “and I’ll set them out in a row in your hall. I’ll get Father Henaghan up to interpret. You’ll have to ask him to lunch, of course; and then, after they’ve done eating, the scientists can have a regular linguistic debauch. I dare say you’d better have Mr. Jackson too, as you’re having the priest. It’s always well to avoid exciting ill-feeling, and the clergy are frightfully jealous of each other.”

“You’ll have to come yourself too,” said the colonel. “I couldn’t face a party of that sort without help.”

“Right,” said Dr. Whitty. “And now, as we’ve only got three days before us, I’d better be off.”

He went straight to the Presbytery and called on Father Henaghan.

"The colonel," he said, "wants you to lunch with him next Tuesday."

"What for?"

"Well, the pleasure of your company for one thing."

"If the other thing has anything to do with Woman's Suffrage," said the priest, "I'm not going. I had enough of that the last time Mrs. Challoner was over."

"She's not here now," said the doctor, "and the subject for discussion on Tuesday is the Irish language. You're interested in that, I know."

"There's a mighty deal of nonsense talked about the same language. It would make you sick to hear the way some of them go on, and then the ones that know least about it."

"That may be," said the doctor. "But the colonel has a German professor and two assistants coming to him on Tuesday, men that have devoted their lives to the Irish language, and are more deeply interested in it than in anything else in the world. They study it, of course, mainly from an etymological point of view."

"I don't know," said the priest, "would I be much use at the ancient Irish. They tell me it's not the same as what we talk now."

"That'll be all right," said Dr. Whitty. "You'll only be wanted to act as interpreter. I'm getting up half a dozen or so old people, and I was thinking of Æneas Finnegan for one. He's upwards of ninety years of age, so I should think his Irish would be ancient enough for anybody. What's more, he's stone deaf and hasn't been able to hear a word that's been said to him for the last twenty years, so his way of talking can't have got corrupted by any modern innovations."

"How do you mean to get him to talk if he's so deaf that he can't hear what you tell him?"

"That's a difficulty," said the doctor, "that can be got over by a glass of whisky. If one doesn't do I'll give him another. The colonel won't grudge it when it's for the sake of his guests. Is there anyone else now that you'd suggest? The Widow Rafferty I'm sure will come if I offer her a bottle of embrocation for her rheumatism by way of a bribe. Then Patsy Flynn's grandfather—"

"You'll not get him," said the priest.

"And why not?"

"Because he hasn't been out of his bed this two years."

"That's no reason why he shouldn't get out of it now. When once he understands that it's a German

professor of etymology that wants to see him he'll be leaping like a two-year-old, and Patsy can bring him in the ass-cart."

"Is it nothing but Irish-speaking you want?"

"Pure Irish," said the doctor. "If possible I don't want anyone there who has a word of English."

"If a good jig would be any use to you," said the priest, "there's Molly Geraghty that was taught by the old fellow that was round giving lessons two years ago, and won a prize for her dancing up in Dublin."

"I don't know," said the doctor, "whether jig-dancing would come in under the heading of etymology or not. But it would be a break in the monotony of the proceedings, and I don't suppose that even a German professor can want to talk Irish the whole afternoon. Who else would you suggest?"

"I think you have your 'nough, as it is," said the priest. "By the time you have old Finnegan half drunk, and Biddy Rafferty telling us all about the pains in her legs till we're tired listening to her, and Patsy Flynn's grandfather getting his death of cold in the ass-cart, him not having been out of his bed for so long, you'll have mischief enough done for one afternoon. You can let the rest of the poor people stay quiet in their homes till they're wanted for something that'll be some good for them."

"I shouldn't wonder," said the doctor, "but the colonel would give them two and sixpence apiece after it's over."

"If that's the way of it, and if you let it be known," said the priest, "you'll get plenty to go—more maybe than the colonel will care to have wiping their boots on the floor of his house."

Colonel Beresford walked up and down the gravel sweep in front of Ballintra House and waited for his guests. He was in an uncomfortable humour, and the excellent cigar which he smoked failed to soothe his nerves. He did not look forward to entertaining a German savant who might or might not be able to speak English fluently. He pictured to himself a grizzled man with a shaggy beard, uncouthly dressed, deficient in manners, and probably dirty. He would be accompanied by two assistants, gauche youths, no doubt, either painfully shy or else bumptious. The prospect was dismal enough. And things were not, in the colonel's opinion, likely to be improved by the additions which Dr. Whitty was making to the party. The three old people who were to speak Irish were sure to cause trouble of some sort, especially if given liberal supplies of whisky. He had not the least wish to see Molly Geraghty dancing jigs in his hall. He threw away the end of his cigar and cursed Sir Clement Hosty heartily. Then he heard the sound of

wheels, and turned to see Patsy Flynn driving his donkey-cart up to the house. In the back of the cart, on a bundle of straw, well wrapped up in old sacks, sat Patsy's grandfather.

"Who the devil are you," said the colonel, "and what do you want?"

"It's my grandfather," said Patsy, "that's come according to what the doctor was saying."

"Oh, is it? Can he talk Irish? He doesn't look as if he'd talk anything much."

"Irish, is it? There isn't one in the county talks it better. If so be you get him started, he'll go on till you'd think the jaws of him would crack. There's no stopping him."

"Take him round to the backdoor then," said the colonel, "and the cook will give him his dinner. I'll send for him when I want him."

Patsy sidled up to the colonel and stood in a deprecating attitude with his hat in his hand.

"Why don't you go?" said the colonel.

"As regards the half-crown," said Patsy, "the old man hasn't as much sense as he might, and I was thinking, if it was pleasing to your honour, that it might be as well to give the half-crown to me."

"What half-crown?"

"The half-crown the doctor's after promising him for talking the Irish to the foreign gentlemen."

"Oh, the doctor promised that, did he? If so, I suppose I'll have to pay up. But I won't give you a penny till I've actually heard the Irish."

Dr. Whitty was the next arrival. He greeted the colonel with an inquiry.

"You're perfectly certain," he said, "that Sir Clement Hosty said etymologists that day in the club?"

"I am," said the colonel, "perfectly. Why?"

"Oh, nothing. Only I happened to hear this morning that there was a man chasing butterflies in the neighbourhood of Dunbeg the last two days, and it occurred to me—but of course you're quite sure about this professor being an etymologist?"

"I am."

"That's all right then. I passed old Finnegan on the way up the avenue, and Father Henaghan is bringing Molly Geraghty on his car."

"One cripple has already arrived in a donkey-cart," said the colonel. "He appears to expect to be paid half a crown."

"I forgot to mention," said the doctor, "that I had to promise them half a crown each to get them to come. It'll only be seven and sixpence. Molly Geraghty will dance for the pleasure of it. By the way, I hope you don't mind, I arranged for your gardener to play for her. He has a melodeon."

"Not in the least. If you think it would be any

comfort to her I'll get the stable boy in to whistle, and we'll have a band. I know he whistles, for I hear him every time I go into the yard."

"Ah," said Dr. Whitty. "Here's Mr. Jackson. He has old Finnegan by the arm. That's nice of him, isn't it? I always said Mr. Jackson had a kind heart. I suppose it comes from having a large family."

Father Henaghan and Molly Geraghty arrived immediately after the rector. Molly, in honour of the occasion, wore a white frock and a bright green sash, which crossed her left shoulder and was tied in a neat bow at her waist. Along it in large silver letters ran the inscription—"Ar Dteanga Féin." Dr. Whitty nudged the colonel delightedly.

"Irish," he said, "the written language. That'll please the professor."

"I hope to goodness," said the colonel, "that it's not any kind of seditious inscription. I don't mind myself; but if Allington was to hear—"

"Lord Allington can't object to that," said the doctor. "It simply means 'our own language.' It might apply to English or French or Chinese or anything."

"It'll be awkward enough as it is," said the colonel. "Allington is frightfully down on this language revival business. Bless my soul, who's this?"

A car drove rapidly up the avenue. On one side of it sat a fresh-complexioned, white-haired gentleman dressed in a smart grey suit of clothes and wearing a light grey felt hat of very stylish appearance. On the other side were two girls in pink cotton frocks, looking very bright and pretty.

"It must be the professor and his assistants," said Dr. Whitty; "but they don't look like etymologists."

Professor Bernstein leaped from the car and introduced himself to Colonel Beresford. Then he presented the two girls, who were, it appeared, his two daughters. There were further introductions, much hand-shaking and smiling. Professor Bernstein made a series of light jokes in rapid succession. His remote ancestors might possibly have come from Germany, but it was quite obvious that he spoke English as his mother tongue. The elder of the two girls took hold of Molly Geraghty and drew her from the priest's side.

"What a sweetly pretty sash," she said. "Is this your daughter, Colonel Beresford?"

"No," said the colonel, "she's not. 'She's —'"

"But what's the inscription?" said Miss Bernstein, still intent on the sash. "I can't even read the letters."

"Ár Dteanga Féin," said Dr. Whitty. "You recognise it at once, of course, professor. 'Teanga'"

is no doubt connected etymologically with the English 'tongue,' the old German for which I have at this moment forgotten, but you'll know. Mr. Jackson will tell us the Greek. What is the Greek for a tongue, Mr. Jackson?"

"Glossa," said Mr. Jackson.

Professor Bernstein stared.

"Glossa," said the doctor. "Glossa, teanga, tongue. I don't quite see the phonetic connection, but I've no doubt it's there. The fact is, I'm not as familiar with Grimm's Law as I ought to be. But this is all ABC to you, professor."

"Shall we wait luncheon for your assistants?" said the colonel.

Professor Bernstein smiled.

"These are my assistants," he said, pointing to his two daughters. "I often say that they're just like butterflies themselves. Some day they'll be caught, I suppose, and then what shall I do?"

Both Miss Bernsteins blushed. The colonel did not catch the point of the joke, and suggested that the car should go round to the stable. Dr. Whitty walked a few yards with the driver to show him the way. On his return he caught the colonel by the arm and whispered to him —

"You're still absolutely certain that Sir Clement Hosty said etymologists?"

"Yes, I am. Don't ask me that again."

"All right," said the doctor, "only I'd have taken my oath that there was a green butterfly net on the back of that car."

At luncheon Professor Bernstein took the lead in the conversation. He was, it appeared, greatly interested in rotifers. No one else, except perhaps his two daughters, knew what rotifers were; so the professor had the subject entirely to himself, until, at the end of ten minutes, Dr. Whitty interrupted him.

"Rotifer," he said, "is a remarkably interesting word. It is derived—you will correct me, professor, if I go wrong—from the Latin root 'fer,' which implies the idea of carrying, and 'rota,' which means a wheel. That reminds me that the Irish word for a bicycle is 'ratha'—the aspirated t, you know, professor—obviously the Latin 'rota' again. Curious that the Irish people, in giving a name to an entirely new object, should have hit on the same way of doing it as the Americans. They always speak of bicycles as wheels, you know. The fact suggests some interesting thoughts about the effect of the Irish mind upon the American language. But perhaps that's a matter rather for the ethnologist than the etymologist."

He looked round for admiration when he had finished this speech. He received it from Colonel Beres-

ford, Mr. Jackson, and Father Henaghan. The professor appeared to be puzzled, and relapsed into silence. His two daughters giggled slightly. They evidently regarded Dr. Whitty's etymology as a joke.

"We have a little surprise for you after lunch," said Dr. Whitty, noticing that the professor did not take up the subject of wheels with any interest. "We have succeeded in collecting together — by the way, Father Henaghan, did the Widow Rafferty arrive? I saw Finnegan, and the colonel tells me that Patsy Flynn's grandfather turned up all right. I hope Biddy hasn't failed us."

"I didn't see sight nor light of her," said the priest.

"If she doesn't turn up," said Dr. Whitty, "she may twist herself into knots with rheumatism before I give her another bottle. You'd have been particularly interested in Biddy Rafferty, professor. I shall be sorry if she's not here."

"Is she very amusing?" asked the eldest Miss Bernstein.

"Not very," said the doctor; "but her Irish is remarkably idiomatic. Every one agrees about that. You think it first-rate, don't you, Father Henaghan?"

"I do," said the priest; "barring that she seldom says a word about anything but the way the rheuma-

tism has her tormented, her Irish is as good as you'd hear."

"But not as ancient as Finnegan's," said the doctor. "The professor, I know, will take a particular delight in Finnegan, and fortunately he's here."

"I—I regret to say," said the professor, "that I've never found time to study the Irish language."

Colonel Beresford became aware that his party was turning out even worse than he expected. There was evidently some misunderstanding about the Bernsteins and the Irish language. He changed the subject of conversation effectively by asking the professor if he had recently seen Sir Clement Hosty. Mr. Jackson, who had known Lady Hosty before she was married, asked several questions about her. Colonel Beresford, after scowling at Dr. Whitty, found an opportunity of telling the butler to give the two Irish speakers five shillings each and send them off the premises.

Greatly to the relief of the rest of the party the Bernsteins declared that they must go away immediately after luncheon.

"I don't like to miss this fine afternoon," said the professor. "There is an interesting series of small lakes in this neighbourhood, in which I may quite possibly come across some unique specimens."

Colonel Beresford turned angrily on Dr. Whitty as soon as the car was out of sight.

"What do you mean," he said, "by letting me in for this tomfoolery?"

"That," said the doctor, "is a question which, properly speaking, ought to be put to Sir Clement Hosty."

"I shall put it to Hosty," said the colonel, "as soon as ever I see him. But it wasn't Hosty who made an ass of me before this professor by filling up my house with cripples and dancing girls."

"As far as the dancing girl is concerned," said Dr. Whitty, "she was Father Henaghan's suggestion entirely. I didn't want her. But neither he nor I are to blame in the slightest. You and Sir Clement Hosty have bungled it between you. Ever since I heard there was a man catching butterflies in Dunbeg I suspected that the professor would turn out to be an entomologist. I felt pretty sure of it when I saw the butterfly net on the car. But you stuck to your theory in spite of all I could say to you; and I still maintain that the entertainment we provided was quite the best possible if the man had been what you told me he was."

"It was etymologist that Hosty said," said the colonel. "I'll stick to that till the day of my death. I couldn't have been mistaken, because Hosty has a

habit of shouting every remark he makes as if the whole world was deaf."

"If I'd been told he was an entomologist," said the doctor, "I'd have talked to him about rotifers. I don't know anything about them, but I could have made them up out of a book before I came. It would have been a great deal easier for me to talk intelligently about rotifers than about Grimm's Law. What's more, I'd have had specimens of every insect in this part of the country ready for him when he came, from the common *pediculus capitis*—"

"Don't be disgusting if you can help it," said the colonel. "Things are bad enough without that."

"There's nothing disgusting about the *pediculus*," said the doctor. "To the truly scientific mind, like the professor's, he's as interesting as any other bug."

"Perhaps on the whole, then," said the colonel, "it's just as well Hosty made that mistake. Your mendicant cripples and Molly Geraghty are bad enough, but they're better than having my house filled up with live fleas."

VI

"GOD SAVE THE KING"

"THE band will play all afternoon, of course," said Dr. Whitty.

He was speaking about the sports—the "Grand Athletic, Bicycle and Boat Racing Regatta," as the advertisement called the event—which were to be held in Ballintra on the first Saturday in August.

"I don't know will it be able," said Father Henaghan, "and if it is, it'll likely be the last time ever it does play."

He was President—in Connacht everything has a President—of the town band. He was also its Honorary Treasurer.

"And why do you say that?" said Dr. Whitty.

"You know well enough," said the priest, "that we had to give the bandmaster notice for want of funds to pay him."

"Surely to goodness," said the doctor, "they must have half a dozen tunes learned off by this time. Nobody'll know whether they play them right or wrong. Let them do the best they can, and make some sort of a noise anyway."

"I don't know," said the priest, "will they be fit to do that much itself. It was only last week they were telling me that the cornet's broke, and I'm thinking they'll do badly without it. What's more, I'm not sure but young Flaherty put the blade of his knife through the big drum."

"We'll have to get them some new instruments then," said the doctor. "The band we simply must have."

"You can't get new instruments, for there's no money, and I don't see where it's to be got after the way you've collected the whole district for the sports. There isn't one about the place has a shilling left in his pocket."

Dr. Whitty had, in fact, levied a sum of money very near the taxable capacity of the people. He recognised the impossibility of securing further contributions.

"I'll tell you what it is," he said. "We must get something out of Lord Allington. That man's as rich as a Jew."

"He never gives a penny," said the priest.

"He does. I happen to know that he gives twenty pounds a year to the Protestant Church on account of having property in the parish, though he doesn't live in it. I don't see why he shouldn't give the half of

that amount to our band. You ought to try him anyway."

"I will not. I asked him for a subscription one time, and the way he refused me I swore I'd never ask him again. Do you go over to Allington Castle and ask him yourself."

"It wouldn't be a bit of good," said the doctor. "But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get the colonel to write. He'd give us something if the colonel asked him."

It took Dr. Whitty a long time to persuade Colonel Beresford to write the letter, but he succeeded in the end. By return of post a reply came from Lord Allington.

"DEAR COLONEL BERESFORD,—I am always ready to support anything which is for the benefit of the tenants on my estate, and I should be perfectly willing to give a subscription to a band managed on non-political lines. Unfortunately, my experience of these local bands leads me to believe that they are nothing more or less than part of the machinery used by seditious persons for the inculcation of rebellious principles. On the only occasion on which I ever heard the Ballintra band play, the tune chosen was 'God Save Ireland.' I am sure you will understand that, in these circumstances, and in the absence of any express guarantee from some reasonable person that no Party

tunes will be played, I cannot conscientiously support the band.

“Thanks for your inquiry for Lady Allington. I am glad to say she is a great deal stronger than she was. The Irish air always sets her up.—I am, yours very sincerely,
ALLINGTON.”

The colonel handed the letter to Dr. Whitty.

“Do you think now,” said the doctor, “that if the band was to play ‘God Save the King’ he’d give us a subscription?”

“I expect he would,” said the colonel, smiling; “but you know as well as I do the band will do no such thing, and there’d be a riot if it did.”

“Colonel,” said the doctor, “do you write to Lord Allington and tell him you will send him a written undertaking from the parish priest—you can put in that the dispensary doctor will sign it, too, if you like—to the effect that the band will play ‘God Save the King’ in the middle of the afternoon on the day of the sports, and that Lord Allington can come over and hear it for himself so as to make sure that it’s actually done.”

“I don’t believe you’ll work it, doctor, Thady Glynn and the League boys would smash up every trumpet the band possessed if you did.”

“You write the letter,” said the doctor, “and leave the rest to me.”

"If you do what you say," said the colonel, "I should think Lord Allington would give you twenty pounds with pleasure; and, what's more, I'll add two pounds to my own subscription if it's only for the sake of seeing the rage Thady Glynn will be in."

Dr. Whitty called on Father Henaghan at once.

"I've ten pounds," he said, "ten pounds at least, and maybe twenty pounds, got out of Lord Allington for the town band — at least I have it as good as got."

"Have you, then? I wouldn't have believed it possible. You're a wonderful man, doctor."

"All he wants," said the doctor, "is a written guarantee from you and me that the band will perform 'God Save the King' on the day of the sports. He says he objects to Party tunes."

"And is that what you call having the money as good as got? You know as well as I do the thing can't be done."

"It can. I'll get the music, and I'll teach it to the band myself. I'm not what you'd call practised in conducting an orchestra, but I have a middling good ear, and I could manage that much. Any new instruments wanted you can get, and pay for when Lord Allington's cheque comes."

"It's not the want of instruments would stop me,"

said the priest. "But the people would never stand it. There'd be the devil and all."

"You needn't appear in the matter," said the doctor. "Beyond writing the letter to Lord Allington you've nothing to do. If there's a row, you can pretend to be as surprised as anyone else. But there won't be a row."

"There will. There couldn't but be a row."

"There will not. There aren't ten men in Ballintra, barring the colonel, Mr. Jackson, and the police, that would know that tune from any other if they heard it. Would you know it yourself now, Father Henaghan? Tell the truth."

"I'm not sure that I would."

"And, if you wouldn't recognise it, how do you suppose that Thady Glynn will? — Thady that has no more ear for music than your cow. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll drop into the hotel this evening, and I'll whistle it in the hearing of Thady. I'll call his attention to it, and I'll bet half a crown he hasn't the least notion what it is."

"Try it," said the priest. "But, mind you, I'll take no responsibility. If there's a row, I'll say you did the whole thing unknown to me."

Dr. Whitty strolled into the hotel at ten o'clock that night. There were five or six men drinking at the bar, all of them, he was pleased to see, prominent

politicians and strong allies of Thady Glynn. He ordered a bottle of porter, and then, leaning against the bar, whistled "God Save the King," loudly and clearly. Then he drank half his porter and whistled the tune through again, throwing great spirit into the last few bars.

"That's a fine tune," he said when he had finished.

"It's good enough," said Thady.

"It's a tune I'm thinking of teaching the town band to play the day of the sports," said the doctor. "It's only the other day it was discovered, hid away in an old book that was buried in a bog in the neighbourhood of the hill of Tara. It turns out to be the ancient tune that was sung by Malachi, the High King of Ireland, at the time he was driving the English out of the country. There's great talk about it up in Dublin."

"It would be well," said Thady, "that the band would learn something new. We're tired of them old tunes they've been playing since the bandmaster was sent away."

Dr. Whitty, in order to make sure of getting the music in the most correct form possible, sent to Belfast for it. He had to copy it all out in manuscript when he got it, because the inconsiderate publisher had printed "God Save the King" at the top of every sheet of the score. Every sheet of Dr. Whitty's ver-

sion had "The Song of King Malachi" written in large letters across the top. The members of the band made fair progress when the doctor took them in hand. He conducted on a system of his own; whistled shrilly, and flung himself into all sorts of grotesque attitudes, waving his arms, clenching his fists, and stamping violently with his feet. He succeeded in working up a most spirited performance of the tune.

The day of the sports was magnificently fine. The band was stationed in a prominent part of the grounds, and a space close beside it was reserved for Lord Allington's motor-car. Dr. Whitty asked Thady Glynn to act as judge and referee in all the races, an arrangement not altogether satisfactory to the competitors, but which he hoped would keep Thady from paying any attention to the band. With the same object he made the secretary and treasurer of the League starter and timekeeper, giving them a pistol, a supply of blank cartridges, and a stop-watch.

At four o'clock Colonel Beresford arrived in his dogcart. Lord Allington drove up in his motor-car at half-past four, and was shepherded by Dr. Whitty into the space reserved for him. He had Lady Allington with him and two strange gentlemen. The band, acting on instructions from Dr. Whitty, struck up "The Minstrel Boy." This is an Irish song, but

quite unobjectionable because it is not stated in Moore's words what war the boy went to or on which side he fought.

After "The Minstrel Boy" had been played through four times Dr. Whitty spoke earnestly to Flaherty, the cornet player, and to the man who managed the big drum. Then he strolled away from the band and engaged in conversation with Thady Glynn. A few minutes later the band struck up "God Save the King." Dr. Whitty looked round nervously. Thady Glynn took no notice of the tune. Most of the people seemed pleased to hear it. The reputation of "The Song of King Malachi" had been spread beforehand by the members of the band, and there was a good deal of curiosity about the remarkable tune. The only thing which disquieted Dr. Whitty was the behaviour of Lord Allington and his friends. The whole party stood up in the motor-car, and the three gentlemen took off their hats. Colonel Beresford, who was standing beside the car, stopped talking to Lady Allington and stood bareheaded.

Thady Glynn, fully occupied elsewhere, did not so much as glance at Lord Allington. Father Henaghan had disappeared from the seat he had occupied all the afternoon. Dr. Whitty made his way rapidly through the crowd towards the refreshment tent, an establishment run in connection with Thady Glynn's

hotel. The band was beginning "God Save the King" for the second time when he reached it. He noticed with pleasure that the starter and timekeeper of the races were drinking whisky and water inside the tent, apparently unconscious of the band's performance. He ran round to the back of the tent. There, he felt sure, he would find Father Henaghan. He found the priest engaged in conversation with Mrs. Michael Geraghty, who was feeding her seven youngest children with biscuits and partially ripe apples.

"Come now, Father Henaghan," he said, "it's time you were going up to speak to Lord Allington to get that cheque out of him."

"Will you whisht," said the priest, with a glance at Mrs. Michael Geraghty.

"It's all right," said the doctor. "Mrs. Geraghty has a respect for the clergy, and wouldn't repeat what I'm saying to you — not that it would matter if she did, for we're talking no secrets."

"I'll go when the band stops playing that tune," said the priest.

"If you wait till then you'll wait too long, for Lord Allington will be gone, and it's ten to one you'll never see that cheque. I know the ways of people of his sort. They set up to be fonder of that tune than of anything else in heaven or earth; but there's no

surer way of getting them out of a place than to play it. The minute they hear the first four notes they're streaming off for the door or the gate, as the case may be. What I'm wondering is that they've stood it as long as they have. Come on, now."

He took the priest by the arm and led him round the tent into the open. The band, very pleased with its own performance, had just begun to play the tune for the sixth time. Lord Allington was still standing bareheaded, but he was looking puzzled and a little annoyed. "God Save the King" is an excellent tune, but it is possible, even for an Irish peer, to get too much of it. There was not, so far as he could see, any sign of exhaustion about the band. Lady Allington, excusing herself on the ground of delicate health, sat down at the end of the fourth repetition of the tune.

"Go on now, Father Henaghan," said Dr. Whitty, pushing the priest towards the motor-car.

Lord Allington turned round.

"Ah," he said, "Father Henaghan, isn't it? I'm delighted to see you. Would you mind telling the band to stop playing for a moment? I can hardly hear myself speak."

Father Henaghan tapped the cornet player on the shoulder and gave his order. The music stopped

abruptly in the middle of a bar. Lord Allington, with a sigh of relief, sat down and put on his hat.

"That's a capital band of yours," he said. "I don't know when I heard a better. All native talent, eh? That's right. Keep the young men out of mischief. By the way, I understand from my friend, Colonel Beresford, that it's dependent entirely on private contributions for its support. I shall have the greatest pleasure in sending you a cheque for fifteen guineas to-night when I go home. That will see you out of your difficulties, I hope. And you can count on me for the future for an annual five guineas. But no Party tunes now, remember that."

Father Henaghan bowed his thanks. Lord Allington, after a whisper from his wife, gave a signal to the chauffeur and drove off the ground.

Two days afterwards Dr. Whitty met Colonel Beresford in the street.

"Come into my house for two minutes, colonel," he said; "I've something to show you."

"Look here," he said, taking a letter from his desk, "read that":—

"The Committee of the League (Ballintra Branch) having had under consideration at a special meeting the conduct of Dr. Whitty, Medical Officer of the Union, with reference to the band on the occasion of

130 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

the recent Regatta and Athletic Sports, hereby allow Dr. Whitty an opportunity of defending himself at 8.15 sharp in the League rooms to-morrow evening.—Signed, on behalf of the Committee,

“THADDEUS GLYNN, President.”

“What do you think of that now?” said the doctor.

“It’s — it’s — the only words that seem to fit it at all are blasted insolence; but, of course, you’ll take no notice of it.”

“Oh yes, I shall. I’ll make that League sit up. I shall have a glorious time with them if only they’re sober enough to take in what I say.”

“You’d better get Father Henaghan to quiet them,” said the colonel.

“Not at all. I’m not going to hide behind the priest. I mean to see the thing through myself.”

At the hour affixed for the trial Dr. Whitty stepped jauntily into the League rooms. He was received in gloomy silence, broken only by an order from Thady Glynn to stand at the end of the table. The doctor took a vacant chair and sat down. Thady Glynn scowled at him. Dr. Whitty smiled pleasantly by way of reply.

“Dr. Whitty,” said Thady solemnly, “it has been reported to us that on the occasion of the recent sports, held in this town, you instigated the band to

play a tune that can only be regarded as a deliberate insult to the Irish people. What have you to say for yourself?"

"What tune?" asked the doctor.

"I won't lower myself by naming it," said Thady; "but it was a tune that's seldom heard in this country outside of a music hall."

"If you mean the ancient 'Song of King Malachi,'" said the doctor, "I quite admit it's not often heard, but the reason of that is that it has only recently been discovered, as I told you and the rest of these gentlemen the night I first whistled it to you. If you had any objection to it you should have said so then."

"King Malachi be damned," said Thady Glynn.

"If you're prepared to let your temper run away with you," said the doctor, "to the extent of cursing one of the greatest heroes of ancient Ireland, of course I can't stop you. All I can do is to tell you that, if I repeat that last remark of yours outside this room, you'll never be able to hold up your head as a Nationalist again."

"Damn you and King Malachi both," said Thady Glynn.

"Very well," said the doctor, "if you're so drunk as to say a thing like that twice, there's no use my talking to you. Good night."

"Wait a minute," said Thady, "you'll not get off so easy as all that. We know well enough what the tune was, and we know why you had it played. You thought you'd make up to the colonel and Lord Allington by heaping insults on the people of this country. That's what you thought. But I may tell you it won't do. It's us and not them that's paying you your salary. It's us and not them that's putting the bread and butter in your mouth, and I tell you it won't do. The tune you were the means of introducing into our midst is a tune that's well known. It's a Party tune, and we won't have it."

"What do you mean to do?" said the doctor.

"We've settled on a decision before you came in," said Thady, "and it's this: that if you don't offer an apology to the people of this neighbourhood, it'll be the worse for you."

"Listen to me now," said the doctor. "As a matter of fact, that tune was played over seven times and a half on the ground the other day, and not a single one of you cared a hang. The man that asked to have it stopped was Lord Allington. If it was the tune you think it was, would he have had it stopped? He would not. He'd have kept the band playing on at it the whole afternoon."

"It's a damned insult—" began Thady Glynn.

“Listen to me,” said the doctor, “and don’t interrupt. If you had as much real principle about you, Nationalist or any other kind, as would make a supper for a snipe, I’d have some pity for you. But you’re the sort of man, Thady, that would sell his mother for the price of a pint of porter. I’ve let you down easy in the past, not telling the things I know about you; but if there’s another word out of your head, I’ll tell every man and woman in the place the dirty trick you tried to play on poor Michael Geraghty the time inspector was down to give him the money for the pier; and, if that isn’t enough, I’ll buy a gramophone and set it playing the tune you don’t like day and night outside the door of your beastly public-house, and, whenever it stops, I’ll pay a boy to go and wind it up; and, what’s more, the next time you’re sick—and that won’t be long if you go on drinking the way you do at present—I’ll give you some medicine that’ll twist you round and round the same way as your wife wrings out the clothes when she has them washed, and tie you up in knots, and, what’s more, will turn you bright green from head to foot afterwards, so that your own children won’t know you when they meet you in the street. After that, if there’s any more fight left in you, I’ll give word to the police about the Sunday

134 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

drinking that goes on in your house, and I'll have your licence taken away from you. And if that's not enough —"

Apparently it was enough. Thady Glynn was cowed by the extraordinary versatility of the doctor's threats. He waved his hand feebly towards the door. Dr. Whitty, after a cheerful good night to the other members of the committee, went home.

VII

HYGIENIC AND SCIENTIFIC APPARATUS

IT was a hot day in June, and Dr. Whitty, not very busy at that season of the year, was sitting in his dining-room smoking. Michael Geraghty put his head in through the window.

"Are you there, doctor?"

"I am," said the doctor; "can't you see me?"

"It's what I have a letter for you. Jamesy Casey, the postboy, gave it to me, knowing I was coming up this way, seeing that it had 'immediate' written on the outside of it."

The doctor looked at the letter.

"It's from my Aunt Eliza," he said. "But what the dickens she can possibly have to say to me in a hurry is more than I can tell you, Michael. It's not once in six months she writes to me, and then it's only to get a prescription out of me that she might as well ask her own doctor for, only that she grudges the poor man what she'd have to pay him."

"Maybe it's took sick sudden she is this time," said Michael, "and wanting to get what would do her good in a hurry."

"She's never sick," said the doctor. "What medicine she uses is for her family. I never recollect her having anything the matter with her."

"If it isn't that," said Michael, "I don't know what it would be; but, sure, if you opened the letter you'd find out."

The suggestion was reasonable. Michael Geraghty, his curiosity aroused, remained with his head pushed through the window.

"'DEAR GEORGIE,'"—read the doctor—"('she's the only person in the world that ever calls me that')—"'I write in great trouble to inform you that your Cousin Annie has contracted a matrimonial engagement—'

Look here, Michael, this letter seems likely to be of a confidential kind. Perhaps you'd excuse my not reading the rest of it out loud."

Michael Geraghty, a man of tact and delicate feeling, retired at once. Dr. Whitty went on with the letter:

"'A matrimonial engagement of a most undesirable kind to a young man who has little or nothing to live on; and, so far as I can make out, never will. His name is against him, for one thing. How can you expect anybody called Augustus Jetty to make his way in the world? But, as your poor uncle said when he heard of it, we've got to make the best of it. Your cousin won't listen to advice either from

her father or me. After a great deal of trouble, your poor uncle has got a situation of a sort for the young man, and we're relying on you to give him what help you can. He's employed on commission, they call it — I don't understand business very well — to travel for the Hygienic and Scientific Apparatus Company. As well as I can make out, he's got to try and sell some kind of surgical instruments, and it'll depend largely on the kind of support he gets from the doctors whether he makes anything or not. We are sending him down to Ballintra to make a start, and we're all relying on you to do the best you possibly can for him. Annie encloses a note from herself, but I dare say there's nothing in it except foolishness.

“ ‘ Your affectionate aunt,

ELIZA.’ ”

Annie's letter was much longer than her mother's. She wrote with considerable enthusiasm about the personal charm, moral superiority, intellectual force, and general desirableness of Augustus Jetty, and ended her letter with a formal threat —

“ And now, George, if you don't do your best for Augustus and sell a lot of his things to all your patients, I'll never speak to you again as long as I live, and you wouldn't like that. Father and mother are perfectly horrid, so we've nobody to help us except you.”

Hard upon the letter Augustus himself arrived.

His appearance was not attractive. He was undersized, pallid, very thin, and seemed to be rapidly growing bald. His eyes were narrow, and of a watery green colour. Dr. Whitty, who had a liking for his Cousin Annie, received him hospitably, and offered him a cigar.

"No, thank you," said Augustus, "I never smoke. The fact is, my heart is a little weak, and I fear the effects of tobacco, which, as you know, is a stimulant."

"I suppose, then, you wouldn't care for some whisky."

"No," said Augustus. "That's a stimulant, too; moreover, I have the strongest possible conscientious objection to the use of alcohol."

Dr. Whitty swallowed a mild oath, but, still recollecting Annie's pretty face, spoke politely to Augustus:

"Is there anything you would care for?"

"Thank you," said Augustus, "if you have such a thing as a banana in the house, I will take it gladly."

"I have not a banana, and, what's more, I don't believe there's one in the town of Ballintra; so, if that's the only form of food you consume, I'm afraid you're likely to go hungry till you leave this."

Augustus sighed heavily.

"What about your surgical instruments?" said the doctor. "Have you brought any specimens with you? I could do very well with a new hypodermic syringe. I broke the needle of my old one last week, and the thing was pretty near worn out any way."

Augustus smiled in a feeble, vacuous way. He produced from his pocket a list, which he handed to Dr. Whitty:

"These are the articles our firm manufactures."

Dr. Whitty read the list through aloud:

"Portable Turkish Baths, 30s. 6d.; superior Quality, Oak, 49s. 6d.

"Home Exercisers, 17s. 6d.; with Patent Springs and Pearl Grips, 25s.

"Electric Belts, 12s. 6d.; Full Strength of Current, 15s.

"Electric Indiarubber Flesh Massage Brushes, 7s. 6d. each.

"Photographic Cameras, Quarter-plate, Guaranteed, £2, 10s. to £4."

"Now, how the devil," asked Dr. Whitty, "do you expect to sell any of those things in a place like this? There isn't a man, woman, or child in the district would take a present of the whole lot of them, or know what to do with them if you laid them out on the mat outside their bedroom doors."

"Annie told me," said Augustus feebly, "you'd be

sure to be able to help me by recommending them to your patients."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do for you. I'll buy a camera myself at £3. I don't want it in the least, and am simply taking it out of affection for my Cousin Annie."

Augustus Jetty seemed disappointed.

"Annie told me," he said, "that you'd be sure to give me a letter of recommendation to all your principal patients."

Dr. Whitty thought the matter over, and remembered the threat at the end of Annie's letter before replying:

"As a rule, I don't do this kind of thing; but in this particular case I've no objection to your sticking Thady Glynn with a portable Turkish bath, if you can. He's away from home to-day at a fair; so I'll give you a letter to Mrs. Glynn, telling her that a portable Turkish bath is the exact thing her husband really wants. If you have the nerve to rush her into buying one before Thady gets back, I'll take all the blame afterwards. I've had it in for Thady Glynn ever since the time he went for me about the band at the Sports, and I don't in the least mind helping you to swindle him out of thirty bob."

"What about the other things?" persisted Augustus. "Isn't there anybody who would buy a home

exerciser? I'm in a position to offer you a commission of 10 per cent. on anything I sell through your recommendation."

"If you like to try the colonel with a home exerciser you can. I'll give you his address. He's a well-off man who wouldn't feel the 17s. 6d. The 10 per cent., which would come to something with a halfpenny in it, as well as I can make out, you can keep to buy furniture when you set up house with Annie. While you're at it, you may as well call on Father Henaghan and see if he'd take an electric belt. He might fancy it, and I don't suppose it can do him any harm. In any case, I'll call round to-morrow and warn him not to use it. The only other people who could possibly buy anything are the Jacksons, and I wouldn't like to stick them for more than a massage brush. They have a large family."

Augustus made a careful list of the names and addresses and went out, promising to be back in time for dinner.

To the doctor's great surprise he returned absolutely jubilant; he had sold all four articles, delivered them to their purchasers, and received cash payment. He offered to make out the amount of Dr. Whitty's percentage, but seemed pleased when the whole sum was made over to him as a wedding present. He sat down and watched the doctor eat his dinner. As

142 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

there were no bananas or nuts, he himself ate nothing but two slices of very hard toast, which the house-keeper cooked under protest. Next morning he left Ballintra.

Dr. Whitty wrote a letter to his aunt:

"MY DEAR AUNT ELIZA,— I have seen Augustus, and feel extremely sorry for Annie! I have sold a specimen of each kind of hygienic and scientific apparatus to the principal inhabitants of this town, and am looking forward with anxiety to the kind of row there'll be to-morrow. Whatever happens, don't send Augustus here again, unless you want to get rid of him permanently. The people here are peaceful, and have a great regard for me; but they will probably shoot him at sight if he appears among them again. Give my love to Annie and tell her to try her young man with a steak and a bottle of porter. He wants fattening up, otherwise he seems all right, and ought to succeed in life, if persistence will help him. Send me a bit of wedding cake when the affair culminates, and believe me your affectionate nephew,

"GEORGE WHITTY."

There was, as the doctor anticipated, a row, or rather four separate rows, next day. The trouble began quite early with a visit from Mrs. Thady Glynn:

"Doctor," she said, "himself is mighty queer this morning, and I'd be thankful to you if you'd give me some kind of a bottle that would do him good."

"I'll come down and have a look at him at once."

"It'd be better for you not. His temper is that riz, he might be for taking a knife to you. It's all along of that portable Turkish bath you sent down to him yesterday."

"If he's fit to take the knife to me," said the doctor, "there can't be much the matter with him except temper."

"There is, then. It would make you cry, if so be it didn't make you laugh, to see the state it has him in. Nothing would do him this morning but to have a try at it. He sat in it for the best part of half an hour, and the perspiration was running down off his face before he was out. When he did get out, you'll hardly believe me, but it had him turned black from his chin to his feet, every inch of him barring his head, which didn't be in the inside of the bath at all."

"Nonsense," said Dr. Whitty, "it can't possibly have turned him black. Why should it? I expect the black was in him before he got in, and the thing hadn't time to do more than bring it to the surface. If he'd stayed where he was for another half-hour it would have all peeled off."

"He does say," continued Mrs. Glynn, "that you've had it in for him this long time, and that you said you'd turn him blue the way he angered you over the tune the band played the day of the Sports."

"Look here, what did you fill the lamp with?"

"The lamp is it?"

"Yes. The lamp you put in under him."

"It did say on the paper," said Mrs. Glynn, "that it was methylated spirits had a right to be put in, but we'd run out of them on account of the way Lizzie does be taking them out of the shop for curling her hair, and I thought a drop of paraffin oil would do as well."

"That's it," said the doctor. "It's lamp-black that's the matter with the man. Go home and tell him to take an ordinary bath with a jampot full of soft soap beside him. That'll make him all right at the end of ten minutes."

"It's what I told him myself. But where was the use of my talking? He said he'd be in dread of any kind of a bath after what that one did to him. He said with the way you were treating him it would be hard to say what colour he'd come out next time, and he'd rather be black itself than either red or blue."

"All right," said the doctor, "if he won't take a bath he'll have to go about the way he is for a day or two. It'll rub off on his clothes by degrees. But, if I were you, I wouldn't give him clean sheets to sleep in till he's got rid of the worst of it."

"He did say that—"

"Hurry up, Mrs. Glynn, I see Father Henaghan's housekeeper and another woman waiting in the hall to speak to me."

"He did say that if you'd take it off him —"

"Well, I won't. I've more to do than spend my time scrubbing your husband with a nail-brush."

"It was the curse he meant," said Mrs. Glynn.

"Curse? I'll put a curse on you that you won't forget as long as you live, unless you get out of this pretty quick. I can't spend the day listening to your foolishness. I'm afraid of my life this minute of what Father Henaghan's housekeeper may have come to tell me, and I'm nearly sure the other woman is the Jacksons' servant."

Father Henaghan, it appeared, was in serious difficulties, if not in actual pain. The whole surface of that part of his body covered by the electric belt had come out in small white blisters. He could neither lie down, nor stand up to put on his clothes, on account of the pain given by the blisters when anything touched them. He wanted the doctor to go down to him. Dr. Whitty started at once, only waiting long enough to hear that Mrs. Jackson's youngest boy had developed an extraordinary series of red blotches on his back, and that the rector's left leg had been afflicted in a similar way. They had both, he was told, used the electric indiarubber flesh

massage brush he had recommended. It took him some time to soothe the physical sufferings and the mental irritation of the clergy.

When he got home he found another letter, marked this time in red ink: "Immediate. In Great Haste."

"It's Aunt Eliza again," he muttered. "I hope to goodness the second girl hasn't got engaged to be married to another commercial traveller. If she has, she may starve before I sell any of his infernal appliances for him."

The news Aunt Eliza's letter contained was of quite a different kind:

"Your Cousin Annie has changed her mind about Augustus Jetty, and I hope this will reach you in time to prevent your selling any of his appliances for him. She has found out he is a vegetarian, and has all sorts of queer notions about his own health. A girl he was engaged to before he met Annie has told her about him. Now, whether it's the thought of the things he eats or the feeling that he used to be after the other girl, I don't know; anyway, she says she'd be glad to get out of her engagement. The worst of it is that the other girl tells us he's a very hard young man to get rid of, and that, now he has Annie promised to him, it's likely he'll stick to her. Annie says that, if he does, she'll marry him if it breaks her heart, rather than go back on her word, for she thinks he's really fond of her, though that's nonsense, of

course. You may be able to help us. If he can't sell any of the appliances he may be willing to give up Annie. That's the only hope I see of getting out of the engagement; so, whatever happens, don't let him sell anything in Ballintra."

Dr. Whitty was still considering what answer he ought to give to this letter when Colonel Beresford appeared.

"I'd be very much obliged to you, doctor, if you could find it convenient to come up to my house and take away that home exerciser I bought from your friend yesterday."

"Surely to goodness," said the doctor, "you weren't such a fool as to go using a thing of the sort?"

"Of course I didn't use it. Is it likely, at my time of life, I'd go tangling myself up with a lot of pulleys and cords? No! What I did was to have it fixed up in the servants' hall. Then I told Jacobs, my man, that he and the cook could take it in turns to work the thing when they'd nothing particular to do. Jacobs has been looking flabby for a long time, and the cook is getting unwieldy with fat. I thought the home exerciser would do them both good."

"So it ought," said the doctor. "I should say myself it'd be the very thing for Jacobs."

"Well, it didn't seem to suit him. I gave him the

papers of 'Directions for Use,' and told him to try it very gently at the first go-off, until he felt he'd got the hang of it properly. I don't know what the fool did, but, anyhow, there's been an accident: Jacobs has a black eye and won't be fit to appear in the dining-room for the next week. The cook's given notice."

"I don't see what can possibly have gone wrong," said the doctor, "unless you bought the twenty-five shilling sort, with the patent springs. You can't trust a patent spring."

"It was that one I did buy," said the colonel. "I thought, from the way you wrote, the man was a friend of yours, and I'd do the best I could for him."

"I suppose," said the doctor, "the patent spring exploded in some way."

"What the cook says is that, all of a sudden, there was a kind of noise: 'the like of what one of them motor-cars would make when it was starting, and a clucking hen along with that,' and that then 'the two handles of the thing came woffling off' and struck poor Jacobs in the eye, I suppose."

"And what do you want me to do? If Jacobs puts a lump of raw meat to his eye it's the only thing that can be done for it."

"I want you to come up and unscrew the thing

off the wall and take it away. I'll get no peace till it's out of the house."

"Can't Jacobs do that?"

"Jacobs won't. He says he wouldn't touch it again for fifty pounds. And the cook won't, and she won't let the groom into the kitchen for fear he'd lose his life over it. She seems to have a strong personal regard for the groom. I asked the under-housemaid, who is the only sensible person left about the place, if she'd have a go at it. I lent her a screw-driver, and I believe the poor girl tried, but—"

"The cook didn't mind about her losing her life, I suppose?"

"She didn't seem to. But, anyhow, the girl failed to get it unscrewed."

"I expect she tried to twist the screws the wrong way," said the doctor. "I never met a woman in my life that could remember which way a screw turns."

"I dare say. At all events, there's nothing for it now but for you to come."

"Couldn't you do it yourself?"

"No. I daren't venture downstairs on account of the temper the cook's in. In fact, my plan was to wait here until you came back and brought the exerciser with you."

"Well, I can't go yet," said the doctor. "I'm frightfully busy at present. Father Henaghan's stomach is covered all over with white blisters, and the rector's leg has a red blotch upon it the size of a porter bottle, and to-morrow's Sunday. If I don't get those two reverend gentlemen straightened out in the course of the afternoon there won't be a religious service of any sort in the town to-morrow; and, on top of that, Thady Glynn has come out black from head to foot, and can't be induced to take a bath."

"If you're going to wash Thady Glynn," said the colonel, "until he's clean, I'm hardly likely to see you up at Ballintra House before Monday, and the dear knows what state the servants will be in by that time."

"Well," said the doctor, "rather than see you absolutely stuck I'll go with you. But you'll have to wait a minute till I write a telegram."

It was to his Aunt Eliza that Dr. Whitty sent his message:

"Strongly recommend Annie to insure the life of Augustus Jetty, marry him, and then insist on his using all his own hygienic and scientific appliances. She'll be a widow in a week."

VIII

LAW AND ORDER, AND THE CAMERA

IT is popularly supposed that all Irishmen take a natural delight in politics and prefer public meetings to every other form of amusement. This is quite a mistake. It is like the corresponding theory, held generally in England, that the Irish prefer potatoes to any other food and take a pleasure in submitting to the guidance of priests. They used to live on potatoes; but it was only because they could get little else. They still, sometimes, respect priests because nobody else in Ireland asks for respect, and men must look up to somebody. They do not really care much for politics, but are driven to them as theatre-goers in provincial towns are at certain seasons of the year forced to go to pantomimes, because no other form of entertainment is offered to them.

Dr. Whitty, for instance, had not the smallest taste for politics. The speeches of Members of Parliament bored him, and he had a definite feeling of hostility towards the League, chiefly because the principal Leaguer in the neighbourhood was Thady Glynn.

Yet Dr. Whitty once in his life took an active part in a political demonstration; and his action, though not gratifying to either of the contending parties, was on the whole beneficial. He himself claimed that he had, at a very critical moment, restored law and order when there was serious danger of a riot.

Shortly after the visit of Augustus Jetty to Ballintra, while the camera he had bought from that unfortunate young man was still a new toy to Dr. Whitty, politics became unusually interesting on Colonel Beresford's estate. A certain widow, Mrs. Canavan by name, was evicted from a farm for which she had paid no rent for seven years. By way of making things as pleasant as possible for Mrs. Canavan, her nephew, Peter Canavan, was given the farm on the understanding that he would allow his aunt to live with him. Peter agreed to this; but, as it appeared afterwards, Peter's wife did not. She was a young woman with seven babies and she thought there was not room in the house for Peter's aunt. Old Mrs. Canavan spoke her mind freely to Peter and there was a good deal of unpleasantness in the family circle. Peter, quite naturally, took to spending most of his time in town and found himself more comfortable in a public-house than at home. It was not Thady Glynn's public-house which he frequented, unfortunately for himself. The quarrel between the

elder and the younger Mrs. Canavan grew acute, and Dr. Whitty was sent for to minister to a black eye inflicted on Peter's wife. Being at the time very much interested in his camera he photographed young Mrs. Canavan while her eye was at its worst. This was the beginning of the fine collection of political pictures which he made before the Canavan case was finally settled.

After being summoned for assaulting her niece, old Mrs. Canavan, the Widow Canavan as she was generally called, declined to return to her nephew's house. She took lodgings in town and denounced Peter as a "land-grabber" of the worst order. Thady Glynn took up her case warmly. Several strong resolutions were passed about Peter; and Dr. Whitty, recognising that he was becoming a public man, photographed him. He also secured a snapshot of the Widow Canavan. Peter did not seem to object to the resolutions in the least; so his aunt went out one night and broke down a wall on the farm, so that a calf was able to stray into a potato-field and do a great deal of damage. For this she was brought before the magistrates and sent to jail for a week. Dr. Whitty photographed her between two policemen, and afterwards photographed the wall. It had been built up again, but Peter obligingly made a fresh breach in it and posed the calf for Dr. Whitty.

154 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

The picture was most realistic and very interesting. A Dublin paper paid half a crown for the use of the negative.

While the Widow Canavan was in prison some members of the League, incited, it was believed, by Thady Glynn, went out to the farm and dug a grave opposite the front door of Peter's house. Peter said that he did not object to the grave in the least; but he spent more of his time than ever in the town. If, even at this stage of the proceedings, he had had the sense to buy his whisky from Thady Glynn all might have gone well with him. Unfortunately he preferred another public-house whose landlord was not an influential man. Dr. Whitty photographed the grave, but the picture was not a success. The hole, hurriedly dug in the dead of night, did not look like a grave. When photographed it did not even appear to be a hole. Dr. Whitty called on Thady Glynn and proposed that the League should, in the interests of art, erect a tombstone beside the grave. Thady, who did not care about photography, said it would be time enough to do that when Peter was in the grave.

The Widow Canavan came out of prison in a very bad temper and full of a desire to take revenge on Peter. She lay in wait for the two eldest Canavan children and threw stones at them as they returned from school. She did not hit them but Peter, who

was getting irritated, took out a summons against her. She went to jail for another week. The constable who took charge of her, a young man fresh from the depot, said that her language made him break out into a cold sweat. Dr. Whitty photographed that constable and added the picture to his collection. It was Colonel Beresford who suggested this picture. He said that the man was a curiosity, and that his features ought to be preserved for posterity before his innocence faded away.

The case began to excite a good deal of interest in the locality, and a subscription was got up for the benefit of the Widow Canavan. Peter, very generously, offered to contribute a shilling; but the League refused to receive the money. Thady Glynn said that Peter's only proper course was to give up the farm, and that a shilling was worse than useless while he continued to hold the land. Dr. Whitty photographed the shilling, having obtained it from the till of the public-house which Peter frequented. The publican said he could take his oath to its being the right shilling, because he felt pretty certain at the time that Peter handed it to him that it was a bad one. He had not, he said, liked to refuse it, because Peter was a good customer, and in trouble at the time.

When the Widow Canavan got out of prison for

the second time she was met by a deputation of the League. Thady Glynn handed her the sum which had been collected, 17s. 9d., and told her the story of Peter's shilling. Any feeling of affection which she may still have entertained for the nephew disappeared when she heard about the shilling. She said publicly that from that day forward she refused to recognise any relationship between herself and Peter. She also felt that she owed the League some return for the money which had been given her. She watched for her opportunity, and got it one evening when Peter lay inoffensively drunk and quite helpless on the side of the road, half-way between the town and his home. She stuck a two-pronged table fork into the calf of his leg. Peter's wife, when she discovered what had been done to her husband, sent for Dr. Whitty. The fork had been extracted before he reached the house, but he offered Peter half a crown to allow him to stick it in again so as to obtain a really interesting photograph. Peter stood out for 5s., and a bargain was struck in the end at 3s. 6d. Unfortunately Mrs. Canavan objected. Dr. Whitty reasoned with her, pointing out that he meant to stick the fork into precisely the same holes that it was in before, and that Peter's leg would not be any worse than it was. She still objected. When he offered, in addition to the 3s. 6d., to let her baby off without be-

ing vaccinated, she hesitated for a minute. Dr. Whitty pointed out, speaking as persuasively as he could, that there were two holes in Peter's leg in any case; whereas, if he escaped vaccination, there was no reason why there should ever be a hole in her baby's arm. Mrs. Canavan listened to him, but in the end she sacrificed the baby. Dr. Whitty was obliged to be content with a photograph in which the fork appeared lying on a chair close to Peter's leg.

Events for the Widow Canavan seemed likely to take their usual course. She was commanded, under certain frightful penalties, to appear before the magistrates in the Petty Sessions Court. No doubt she would have been quietly and unobtrusively condemned to another period of imprisonment if circumstances had not combined to make her case notorious. The publication of Dr. Whitty's leg-and-fork photograph excited a good deal of public attention. The Government then in power, being anxious to do something unpopular with regard to China, found it necessary in the first instance to pacify certain powerful people by establishing a reign of Law and Order in Ireland. It was a thoroughly well-intentioned and benevolent Government, which did not wish to annoy anyone unnecessarily. The Widow Canavan, however, seemed to it to be just the sort of person who might be used for great ends without injustice of any sort. The

fact that she would be vigorously dealt with was rather ostentatiously advertised, and two Resident Magistrates were told off to try her case. On the other hand, the League, goaded on by Thady Glynn, saw in the Widow Canavan the makings of a striking victim of landlord tyranny. A Dublin barrister of great eloquence was engaged, at a fee, it was understood, of forty pounds, his travelling expenses, and his luncheon in Thady Glynn's hotel, to prove that the sticking of the fork into Peter's leg was an act of patriotic virtue which deserved a reward, and not a punishment. A Member of Parliament noted for his skill in breezy invective promised to supplement the barrister's oration with a speech to the general public outside the Court House.

The widow's fate was, of course, decided beforehand. The Resident Magistrates were quite ready to listen to the barrister, and anticipated an agreeable entertainment; but they were not the men to be moved by anything which could possibly be said to them in Court. Nobody expected that their judgment would be altered by so much as a day's imprisonment as a result of the barrister's speech. Allowing him an hour in which to make his speech, they ordered a brake to be at the door of the Court House at one o'clock, to convey the Widow Canavan to the County Jail. The only item in the programme which gave

rise to any speculation was the speech of the Member of Parliament. It was possible that he might so far work upon the feelings of the people who heard him that the people would feel obliged to attack them with batons.

Thady Glynn, hoping for the best, arranged that there should be a large number of people to listen to the Member of Parliament. The Government, also hoping for the best, arranged that there should be a considerable force of police outside the Court House ready to attack the people. Dr. Whitty, who, like Thady Glynn and the Government, had hopes, arranged to take a photograph of the baton charge if it came off. He obtained a supply of highly sensitive plates guaranteed to record satisfactory impressions with the shortest possible exposure. Fortune favoured him. The day was remarkably fine and the light was good. With the help of Michael Geraghty, who supplied some planks and low trestles, he arranged his camera on a sort of platform at the base of the statue recently erected to the memory of Wolfe Tone. The situation was an ideal one, for the statue stood in the middle of the street which led from the Court House to the Fair Green. If there was flight and pursuit it was almost certain that they must pass the statue. Dr. Whitty had everything in perfect readiness before twelve o'clock. Michael Geraghty,

who was greatly interested in the camera, stood beside him on the improvised platform.

The two Resident Magistrates passed up the street to the Court House. They were strangers to Dr. Whitty, and they looked at him suspiciously. In Ireland the guardians of law and order have to be suspicious. Dr. Whitty seized the bulb by which the shutter of his camera was released, and photographed them. He hoped the focus would turn out to be right. The Resident Magistrates were pleased. The photograph was a tribute to their personal importance. They passed on without molesting Dr. Whitty. The barrister and the Member of Parliament, escorted by Thady Glynn, came next. Dr. Whitty hailed Thady, and while the party turned round to look at him secured another photograph. Michael Geraghty was delighted, and persuaded a body of police who marched up the street to halt in front of the camera. The serjeant in command happened to be married to a niece of Michael's wife, so there was no difficulty about getting the men to stand still. Some leading members of the League, on their way to help in the administration of justice, were also photographed. Then ensued a long period of waiting.

"The brake," said Michael Geraghty, "isn't ordered till one o'clock. I was talking to the man who is to drive it, and he told me so himself. If there's

anything that you'd like to be doing in the meanwhile, doctor, you have time enough."

"I wouldn't trust them," said Dr. Whitty. "If I went away it's as likely as not they'd hurry the whole thing up, and I'd miss the show afterwards."

"They couldn't. Isn't the man they have down from Dublin to be talking for the best part of an hour? Would they pay him forty pounds for less?"

"I have no doubt he will if he's let," said Dr. Whitty. "But there was a determined look in the eye of the nearest of the two magistrates. I wouldn't wonder if they cut him short."

"They might then, them two, if they was left to themselves. But the colonel will be on the bench along with them ones, and he'll see fair play all round. He doesn't care a great deal for Thady Glynn, but he isn't the man to see forty pounds spent and nothing done for the money."

"The colonel won't be on the bench. The very first thing that Dublin man will do will be to put the colonel off. He'll say the colonel's an interested party and ought not to sit on the case."

"I wouldn't wonder if he did say that; but the colonel mightn't go for him."

"He will," said Dr. Whitty. "I know him well. If they make out that he has any sort of connection

162 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

with either Peter's leg or the fork he'll step down off the bench at once."

"As regards the Widow Canavan, it'll be the same thing whether he does or doesn't."

"It will, of course; but it'll be so much to the good for the Dublin lawyer if he succeeds in chasing the colonel."

Events justified the prophecies of both Dr. Whitty and Michael Geraghty. The colonel resigned his place on the bench, but the barrister made a full-length speech. At one o'clock the brake drove slowly up the street and was hooted vigorously by the crowd. It took its stand outside the Court House door, under the protection of a double line of police. At a quarter-past one the Widow Canavan, in the charge of four constables and uttering terrific language, was hustled into it. It drove through the crowd and Dr. Whitty obtained a photograph of it as it passed him. Thady Glynn, the barrister, who looked hot, and the Member of Parliament appeared on the Court House steps. The crowd cheered vociferously. The Member of Parliament stepped to the front, took off his hat, and began to speak.

"I can't hear a single word he says," said Dr. Whitty. "Can you, Michael?"

"I cannot; but, sure, I've often heard the like before."

The two Resident Magistrates, followed by Colonel Beresford, slipped round the back of the Member of Parliament and took up a secure position among the police.

"I wouldn't wonder," said Michael Geraghty, "but he might be saying things against the colonel now. He has all the look of it."

The orator's arm was in fact stretched out and his finger pointed in the direction of the place where Colonel Beresford was standing.

"It's either him or the magistrates that's getting it, and getting it hot this minute," said Michael Geraghty. "Look at the way Thady Glynn has his hat took off of his head and it waving up and down in the air. The like of that I have never seen yet."

The Member of Parliament was evidently doing his best. The cheers of the crowd testified to the fact that he was speaking acceptable things. Urged on to fresh exertion by the popular approval of his efforts, his voice rose to a sort of shriek, and the word "Hell" came ringing down the street.

"Good," said Dr. Whitty, "if those magistrates are any use they'll put a stop to that."

But neither the magistrates nor the police showed any sign of unusual emotion. The Member of Parliament wiped his forehead and started again. He made a good beginning, and the words "Men of the

West" were plainly audible to Dr. Whitty and Michael Geraghty. Then for a while his strength failed him, and it was not until he reached his second peroration that Dr. Whitty heard any more. Then the expression "dastardly land-grabber" sounded out clearly. The police did not seem to object to that in the least, but the Member of Parliament was a determined man. At the end of another quarter of an hour he succeeded in saying something which stirred up one of the magistrates. There were signs of activity among the police. The Member of Parliament worked himself up to a series of inarticulate shrieks. Batons were snatched out of their cases. Thady Glynn, the barrister, and the Member of Parliament, who was breathless and somewhat dishevelled, skipped back into the Court House. The crowd began to run down the street. The police came after them, were among them, struck right and left with their batons.

Dr. Whitty seized his opportunity. Just as the foremost members of the crowd reached the front of his platform he sprang forward.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Hold on! Stand just as you are for a single instant! All of you!"

Everybody looked up, and everybody stopped in sheer amazement. There was something about Dr. Whitty's shout, a cheerful gaiety, a sort of suggestion that the whole thing was a game got up for his amuse-

ment, which took the heart out of police and people alike. Most of them knew the doctor well, and everybody liked him. He squeezed the bulb which he held in his hand. There was a sharp click, plainly audible in the silence which followed the pause.

"Thank you, gentlemen," said Dr. Whitty. "Now just stand as you are till I change the plate and take you again. The police will kindly look as ferocious as they can. Everybody else must wear an expression of terror. Nobody may grin. I notice several men grinning now. Please don't do it. This is a serious business. It is riot, and will be reported in all the papers."

The taller of the two magistrates, the man whom Dr. Whitty had noticed earlier in the day as looking determined, elbowed his way through the crowd.

"What's this?" he said; "what's all this? Why aren't the police doing their duty?"

"It's all right," said Dr. Whitty cheerfully. "They'll be doing it again in a minute. I'm just taking a photograph. Just stand where you are, will you? You'll look uncommonly well there. Your expression of face is perfect. Michael Geraghty, give me that other slide, quick. Not that one. The plates in that are used. Oh, confound it! Here's that ass Thady Glynn."

Thady, the barrister, and the Member of Parlia-

ment, noticing from their post inside the Court House door that there was a hitch in the proceedings, came hurriedly down the street.

"We protest," said Thady, "against this outrageous attack which the police —"

"You shall hear more of this," said the Member of Parliament. "I shall denounce these proceedings from my seat in the House. I shall —"

Dr. Whitty's shutter clicked again.

"Thank you, gentlemen," he said. "I think I can promise two successful pictures. I've quite finished now, and any time you like to go on with your riot you can."

Everybody, except the magistrate, Thady Glynn, and the Member of Parliament, grinned broadly. No one showed any intention of either running away or pursuing. Some one on the outskirts of the crowd demanded a speech from the doctor.

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Whitty, "I think you will all agree with me that the proceedings have terminated in a manner most satisfactory to everybody concerned. My photographs will be published in a large number of newspapers. They will prove how enthusiastically the Royal Irish Constabulary respond to the call of duty. Nothing could be better calculated to establish the reputation of the force than a representation of it in the very act of attacking a crowd. On the

other hand, the cause of the League will be greatly advanced in Great Britain, Ireland, and America, when it is shown by actual photographs how brutally the people of this country are coerced by the armed forces of British rule. Again, the police would certainly have got very hot and uncomfortable if they had gone on running down this street at the rate at which they started. Now, if they don't particularly want to run, they can go quietly back to their barrack. Also, if the riot had gone on, a number of people, probably quite innocent people, would have got hit about the head and body. They ought to be thankful to have escaped."

"Three cheers for the doctor," said Michael Geraghty.

Colonel Beresford made his way through a thoroughly good-humoured crowd to the Resident Magistrate.

"I really think," he said, "that we shall all look rather fools if we go on with the baton charge after this incident."

IX

BUOYING THE CHANNEL

THE day was hot, really hot, as days very seldom are on the Connacht coast. Dr. Whitty was bathing off the end of the pier and enjoying himself greatly. Michael Geraghty sat on the edge of the pier with his legs dangling over the water and gazed gloomily at the doctor. From time to time he struck a match and lit a damp plug of tobacco which lay at the bottom of the bowl of his pipe. There came after a while to be quite a flotilla of matches in the water round the steps of the pier. Two of them stuck to the doctor's legs when he dragged himself at last on to dry land. He picked them off and dropped them into the sea again.

"I wish," he said, "that you'd get out of the habit of using a whole box of matches to light your pipe. Why won't one do you?"

"The times," said Michael Geraghty, "are mighty dull."

"I don't see," said Dr. Whitty, "that that's any reason for wasting matches. In fact I should say that a wave of commercial depression such as you hint at

ought to lead sensible men to consider small economies."

"What's troubling me most," said Michael Geraghty, "is them two anchors. I'm sorry now that ever I bought them, though I don't deny but I got them cheap."

Dr. Whitty was rubbing himself vigorously with a rough towel.

"What anchors?" he said.

"Them two anchors that I bought the time of the wreck. The customs officer was selling what was left of the ship, and I got the both of her anchors for five shillings. They're good anchors. You wouldn't see better. But what's the use of them in a place like this?"

"Was that the time we had the clergy up talking Latin and Greek to Affy Hynes?"

"It was," said Michael Geraghty, grinning.

Dr. Whitty slipped his shirt over his head. Then he fished a pipe out of his coat pocket, pressed the tobacco into the bowl and sat down on the steps of the pier. The sun was shining very brilliantly and he liked the feel of its heat on his bare legs.

"Hand over that box of matches," he said, "if there are any left in it."

"They're good anchors," said Michael Geraghty. "Devil the better you'd see. But where's the use of

them lying in the shed at the back of the house?"

"Why don't you sell them if they're as good as all that? You couldn't get less than five shillings for them whatever happened."

"Sell them! It's thankful I'd be to sell them if I could. But who'd buy them?"

"Advertise in *The Irish Times*," said the doctor. "There must be somebody in the world somewhere who wants a good anchor."

"It wouldn't be a bit of use. The carriage of them things to any place where they might be wanted would be more than they'd cost when they're new. What with carting them all the way to Dunbeg and the railway rates, which has the people of this country robbed —"

"There's a commission sitting on railway rates this minute," said the doctor. "If you were to threaten the company that you'd bring up the case of your two anchors, you might get them carried cheap in an empty truck."

"I would not," said Michael gloomily. "Don't I know I wouldn't? And there'd be the price of the advertisement to be considered."

Dr. Whitty pulled on his trousers and collected together his boots and socks. Then he said —

"Why don't you sell them to the Government?"

"Is it the Lord Lieutenant?"

"Well, not exactly the Lord Lieutenant personally. You could hardly expect him to invest his hard-earned savings in old anchors just to oblige you. When I said the Government, I meant the Board."

"What Board?"

"Any Board. It doesn't seem to me to matter what Board buys them so long as you get your price. You've plenty of choice. There's the Prisons Board, the Agricultural Board, the National Board of Education —"

"Talk sense," said Michael Geraghty. "What would one of them school inspectors be doing with an anchor if he had it?"

"That would be his affair. He might take it round with him for the purpose of giving the children an object-lesson in navigation. But I wouldn't be inclined to try the Education Board first of all. You might fall back on it if all the others fail. But I'd begin with the Congested Districts Board."

"I might try them."

"They're a good Board," said the doctor, "engaged in every kind of miscellaneous work. They'd be able to find some use for almost any sort of odds and ends —"

"The anchors is good anchors," said Michael

stiffly. "I wouldn't be trying to get the better of a Board by selling them rotten stuff."

"You would not, of course; and I wouldn't help you if I thought you were perpetrating any sort of swindle. In fact, I'll step round as soon as I've finished dressing and take a look at the anchors, so as to be sure they're all right. If we were going to deal with the Education Board it wouldn't so much matter, but the Congested Districts Board is as likely as not to tie some floating objects to the anchors and sink them in the sea, so we'll have to make sure beforehand that they'll bear the strain."

Dr. Whitty fastened his collar and made a neat bow of his tie. Then he smoothed his wet hair with both hands and put on his hat. Michael Geraghty rose slowly to his feet, and the two men went together through the town to the shed at the back of Michael's house.

"Those," said the doctor, "seem to me very large anchors. They are much bigger than I expected."

"They are big, of course. She was a three-master from San Francisco that they belonged to first of all."

"I'm afraid," said the doctor, "that we can't approach the Congested Districts Board directly about the purchase of those anchors. They'd shy at the enormous size of them."

"I was thinking that myself."

"But there's no reason why we shouldn't get at them obliquely. After all, there'll be much less suspicion excited if we pretended that we weren't selling anchors. The proper way to get at a Board of that sort is to start a public agitation in favour of some purely philanthropic scheme and then slip in the anchors at the end in a way that they won't be noticed. The thing for us is to hit on some work of public utility which will involve the use of anchors. Now what sort of things can be done with anchors?"

"If so be," said Michael, "that the Board had any notion of establishing a fishing station here, they'd be wanting to have an old hulk in the bay to hold the ice for packing the mackerel in, and she'd have to be anchored."

"That's not a bad idea. But I doubt if it would work out satisfactorily. The chances are that any hulk they'd bring here would have her own anchors. Nice fools we'd look if we saddled the town with a fishing station and had all the people running into debt to buy boats and nets and things, and then at the latter end found that we hadn't got rid of the anchors. But there must be other things besides ice hulks which require anchoring. What about a lightship?"

"A lightship?"

"Yes. I suppose you could build one if you got the order, and fit it out with anchors?"

"I'm not sure could I. I never seen one of them things."

"You could do it all right if you tried. After all, it wouldn't be any harder than building a pier, and you did that. A lightship is just the sort of thing that's wanted here. We could quote that wreck to show the necessity for it."

"How would it be," said Michael doubtfully, "if we was to ask for a buoy? I'd be easier in my mind working with buoys, which is what I know something about."

"Right," said Dr. Whitty. "We'll have buoys. We'll have the channel up to the pier marked out with two large buoys."

"It would take more than two buoys to mark out that channel," said Michael, grinning. "Sure the rocks is as thick as fleas on a dog's back."

"It doesn't matter how many they put. Let them put fifty if they like. Our point is that there must be at least two fastened to the bottom of the sea with really first-rate anchors. That is our irreducible minimum. You see the way the thing works out, don't you, Michael? These Boards which spend public money are always most frightfully conscientious about effecting small economies. When we get them

to agree to buoy that channel they'll simply jump at your two anchors in order to save the expense of dragging others all the way from Dublin."

"I see that."

"Very well. Go you now and write a proper petition to the Board. When you have it written take it round and get everybody to sign it. Get the priest and the rector and the old colonel first of all. I'll drop in on the colonel as I pass the house and tell him to expect you. Get Thady Glynn and the League fellows. They won't refuse."

Michael Geraghty wasted no time after the doctor left him. He sent a message down to the school requesting the presence of his eldest daughter at once. She was, he said, urgently required at home. He realised that he was not very sure of the way to spell certain unusual words likely to be required in the petition, and Molly wrote a very good hand. Early in the afternoon he had his document ready for signature.

"TO THE RIGHT

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF YOUR BOARD

"DEAR SIR,—It is the unanimous desire of us, the inhabitants of Ballintra, signed herewith, to have the channel leading up to the pier, lately built by your honourable Board, marked out plain with buoys. Now I say at once that of all the blessings which your honourable members have conferred on us, the people

of the congested districts, this would be the greatest and at once the most needed. To do this, I have practically worked it out, and it would require two buoys, and you can see at once the untold blessing it must prove to the poor. Then again, see the advertisement it must prove to the district in opening direct communication by sea with tourists and the public generally. I again impress the great urgency there is in the establishment of the scheme, and I assure you I shall do a man's part in making it a huge success. I should mention that the officials of your honourable Board in discharge of their duties will not be near so liable to be drowned provided you grant the buoys, same to mark the worst of the rocks, which as situated presently is a constant danger to boats and ships. The price of the buoys would not be much in the eyes of your honourable members. The anchors for same being all that would come expensive, and them not very if properly worked. The gentlemen whose names appear below includes all the principal men of the district, without religion or politics, and there will be more of them if more is wanted by the honourable Board. But where would be the use? "

At about six o'clock in the evening Michael Geraghty called on Dr. Whitty. He carried the petition in his hand.

"I dunno," he said, "will it be any use posting it to the Board at all."

"Why not?"

"The priest won't sign it, and no more will Mr. Jackson. I didn't try the rest of the people, for what good would they be if the clergy held back?"

"Nonsense," said Dr. Whitty. "They must sign."

"I tell you they won't then, neither the one of them nor yet the other."

"You must have gone about it in some silly way and got their backs up. I saw the colonel this afternoon, and he promised he'd sign. Did you try him?"

"I did not. What was the good?"

"Well, run up with it to him now and get his signature. I'll step round in the meanwhile and see the two clergymen."

Mr. Jackson, when Dr. Whitty walked up to the Rectory, was mowing his lawn and looked hot.

"Give me a turn at that," said the doctor. "I'll finish off round the flower-beds while you sit down and rest yourself."

"It's very good of you," said the rector, "but I couldn't think of allowing you to—"

"Nonsense," said the doctor, seizing the machine. "I shall enjoy it. By the way, I hope you agree with Colonel Beresford about the necessity for having the channel up to the pier properly buoyed."

"Colonel Beresford?"

"Yes. He's using all his influence with the Con-

gested Districts Board to get it done. Michael Geraghty is forwarding a sort of petition."

"I saw that," said the rector, "but I didn't know that Colonel Beresford—"

"The colonel didn't actually write it out," said the doctor, "but he's signing it."

"It struck me as rather an illiterate document. I hardly cared to put my name to— Not that I've any objection to buoying the channel. I merely felt that— Did you read the petition?"

"No, I didn't."

"It's expressed in such an odd way. If it was written out again in decent English—"

"I see what you mean; but, if you'll excuse my saying so, you're making a mistake. The colonel and I were particularly anxious to have it expressed in that sort of way. You know the Congested Districts Board, of course?"

"Not personally."

"Ah! Well then you wouldn't understand. The fact is, that Board particularly prides itself on being in direct touch with the people. It likes all petitions to come from the people, and tries to avoid having anything to do with the educated classes. That's the reason we got Michael Geraghty to draw up the thing himself."

"Oh!" said the rector. "I hadn't thought of that."

Of course, if Colonel Beresford thinks that's the wisest plan—"

"That's right," said the doctor. "I'll send Michael round with it again this evening, and you'll sign."

He finished off the mowing and walked on to the Presbytery.

"I'll not put my name to any such thing," said Father Henaghan. "Do you want to make a public fool of me?"

"I do not. Is it likely I'd want to make a fool of you and Mr. Jackson and the colonel, not to mention myself?"

"Well, then, what did you send Michael Geraghty round with that paper for? Didn't you know—"

"Look here now, Father Henaghan," said the doctor, "be sensible. What was that paper?"

"So far as I could make out it was meant to be a petition to the Congested Districts Board."

"It was. Now, what do you suppose generally happens to petitions sent to public Boards?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I'll tell you. Some clerk or other takes them and enters the name of them along with a number in a large book. When he does that he goes home to his tea, and nobody ever hears anything more about them. That's the ordinary, well-written, sensible-looking petition. There's simply no use sending it

in at all. But what do we do? We draw up a petition which strikes the clerk who reads it as out of the common. Instead of indexing it and going home, he passes it on to some kind of official above him. He thinks it an excellent joke, and shows it to some one else. In the end it gets to the really influential people—the bishops and men of that sort who actually run the Board. Then it's attended to."

"All the same I don't see—"

"Surely you're not opposed to having the channel up to the pier properly marked out with buoys? You can't mean that. You ought to have more sense than to be setting yourself against the will of the people in a matter of the kind. Let me tell you, Father Henaghan, there's lots of men in Ireland at the present moment only too anxious to get a hold of some sort of excuse for attacking the clergy. If it comes out that you refused to take any part in the movement for buoying out the channel, your action will be represented in a most unpleasant way. Besides, after all, you must want to have the channel buoyed."

"I don't care whether it is or not. There isn't a boat goes up to that pier once in twelve months. What good will it be?"

"That's not the way to look at it at all. What you ought to be asking is: What harm can it possibly do?"

"I don't suppose it'll do any harm, because I don't suppose it'll ever be done."

"Very well then, you'll sign the petition. It's for your own good that I'm pressing you. Mr. Jackson is signing it, and it won't look at all well if you refuse."

When the petition had been dispatched with about thirty signatures attached to it, Dr. Whitty had another interview with Michael Geraghty.

"Michael," he said, "it won't do for you simply to sit down and wait for the Board to come along and buy your anchors. You must stir yourself and work things up a bit."

"Is it a public meeting you have in your mind?"

"It is not. A public meeting is an excellent thing in its way, but I strongly suspect that the Board will send down my old friend Eccles to look into this matter. You remember Eccles, don't you?"

"I do," said Michael. "He was the gentleman that wanted a bit added on to the end of the pier."

"Exactly. He's not by any means a fool; and a public meeting wouldn't impress him in the least. What we want for him is a few wrecks."

"Wrecks, is it?" said Michael doubtfully.

"Yes. Wrecks — wrecked boats lying on the rocks on the way to the pier. The rocks that we want to

have buoyed. Are there any old boats you could get the loan of for a few days?"

"There is, of course."

"Very well, get them. Get half a dozen if you can. Row them out and put them on the rocks, one on each rock that you can find near the pier. When you have them there I'll photograph them, and send copies of the pictures up to the Board. That will prepare Eccles' mind for what he may expect when he gets down here. When he arrives, we'll take him out in a boat and run him on to a rock just to show him how dangerous the place really is."

"I wouldn't care to do the like to any gentleman."

"He can swim," said the doctor. "You needn't be the least anxious about him, and, anyway, it won't come to swimming if you manage properly."

In due time Mr. Eccles arrived. Dr. Whitty met him at the railway station, and invited him to luncheon.

"After that," he said, "I'll take you down to the pier. I asked a few people to meet you there—Father Henaghan, and Mr. Jackson the rector, and Colonel Beresford, and Michael Geraghty. Unfortunately none of them could come except Michael, but he'll explain to you exactly what has to be done."

"Whitty," said Mr. Eccles after luncheon, "I don't mind telling you beforehand that the Board is going

to mark out that channel of yours. It won't make a bit of difference now whether you tell me the truth or not, but I'd like to know, as a matter of curiosity, why the devil you want the thing done. It won't bring any money worth speaking of into the place. We'll send down all the things we want from Dublin, and your friend Geraghty, who seems to be at the bottom of the swindle, won't earn a penny over it."

"If it's a swindle," said the doctor, "why on earth is your Board doing it? You ought to have stopped them. You're their marine adviser, aren't you?"

"I tried to stop them," said Mr. Eccles, "but that infernal petition of yours was too much for me. The part about the benefits which the honourable members had conferred on the people fetched the Board like anything. There are two or three of the honourable members who can really see a joke, and they insisted that the channel should be marked out. Now I've been quite frank with you, and I expect you to tell me the inner meaning of the move."

"The fact is," said Dr. Whitty, "that the channel is frightfully crooked and dangerous. Boats are continually running on rocks, and though there have been no lives actually lost as yet, there's no saying when some poor fellow with a wife and family de-

pending on him will get drowned. You saw those photos I sent up to the Board, I suppose."

"Yes, I saw them.

"I suppose you think they were faked. Well, you're wrong, quite wrong. Every one of them represents an actual boat on a real rock."

"Three of them," said Mr. Eccles, "appeared to me to represent the same boat on different rocks."

"Quite so," said Dr. Whitty. "That particular boat ran on to three rocks; but the others were all different boats. Most of them are still on the rocks, and Michael Geraghty is going to take you out this afternoon and show you the wrecks. You'll believe they're there if you're allowed to touch them, I suppose."

"Thanks, but I don't think I'll go boating with Michael Geraghty. I don't particularly want to supply you with a photograph of another wreck."

"Michael can't swim a stroke, so you needn't be afraid. He'll be careful."

"All the same I won't go. All I came down here for was to find out for my own satisfaction the truth about this business. If you won't tell me, I must just go back to Dublin and send down the perches which the Board has ready for your rocks."

"Perches!" said the doctor.

"Yes, perches. Iron posts with round iron shields

on top of them, painted red or black. The usual things for marking out channels."

"It wasn't perches we asked for," said the doctor, "but buoys."

"I know that; but buoys would be ridiculous on rocks that are uncovered at low tide. What you want is perches."

"It's not perches we want, but buoys. Perches would be no kind of use to us one way or another. If it's perches you're going to put up, you may as well save yourselves the trouble, for we won't have them. It must be buoys or nothing."

Mr. Eccles lit his pipe. Then he sat without speaking for nearly ten minutes. He was thinking deeply.

"Whitty," he said at last, "you have me fair beaten. I'm damned if I see what good buoys will be to you. I mean to say buoys as distinct from perches — not that I see what you expect to gain by having either."

"It's buoys we want," said Dr. Whitty, "and so, of course, it's buoys you'll give us in the end."

"I'm not at all sure about that. What the Board has decided on is perches."

"That was before the Board knew how strong the public opinion of the district was in favour of buoys."

"I don't think," said Mr. Eccles, "that the Board is at all likely to change its mind."

"If it doesn't, it will stultify itself, and will act in a frightfully immoral and fraudulent way. Hitherto, Eccles, in spite of your cynical and bureaucratic spirit, your Board has been honourably distinguished among all the other Boards of the country as being the only one which possesses the confidence of the people. It has boasted of the fact, and drawn immense sums from the Imperial Treasury on the strength of its being a really popular Board. When it comes out in Parliament, as it certainly will come out, that it has deliberately flouted local opinion, and has forced a lot of beastly perches which nobody wants down the throats of a decent set of intelligent and progressive people, who asked for a few buoys — when that happens its reputation will be gone, and it will be hauled over the coals for obtaining money under false pretences, saying it was in sympathy with the wishes of the people when it really offers factious and contemptible opposition to a perfectly reasonable demand."

"Look here, Whitty, I make you a fair offer. Tell me honestly why you prefer buoys to perches, and I'll do my best to get you buoys."

"I'll tell you with pleasure. You offer us a dozen or so great iron perches —"

"Fourteen, to be quite accurate."

"Very well, fourteen. We ask for two simple buoys."

"Two?"

"That's all we insist on. Two buoys. Now, supposing each buoy costs the same as a perch. It won't, as a matter of fact, cost as much—I'll explain in a minute. But supposing each buoy costs as much as a perch, by adopting our scheme the Board will effect an economy of twelve-fourteenths—in other words, six-sevenths of the total amount to be spent. Public money, you recollect, Eccles. Your Board may like wasting money; but we have a highly developed civic conscience, and we'd rather see the sum we don't actually want ourselves spent on some other deserving district. Are you listening to me?"

Mr. Eccles had crossed the room, and was staring out of the window, drumming a tune on the panes of glass with his finger-tips.

"No, I'm not," he said; "but I will as soon as you begin to talk sense."

"A further economy will be effected," said Dr. Whitty, "by adopting our buoy scheme, because the Board will be able to save the carriage for the anchors of the buoys. It happens, by the merest chance, that there are in the town at the present moment two remarkably fine anchors which the Board can buy."

188 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

Mr. Eccles stopped playing tunes on the window and turned round.

"Belonging, I suppose," he said, "to your friend, Michael Geraghty?"

"Yes," said Dr. Whitty, "to Michael Geraghty, who is perfectly willing to sell them at a reasonable price."

"Why on earth couldn't you have told me that before?"

"I wasn't quite sure," said Dr. Whitty, "that you'd see it in the proper light."

"I don't; but I admire it greatly. If I could I'd stop the whole thing, and give you and Michael Geraghty three months in jail — but —"

"Don't be violent, Eccles. That sort of language isn't at all suitable in the mouth of a Government official."

"As I can't do that, and as my Board is bent on making an ass of itself —"

"It's not. It's living up to its reputation and being popular."

"I shall recommend it to mark out the channel with buoys instead of perches. I suppose if I send you down two good buoys you'll be satisfied."

"And buy the anchors."

"And buy the anchors, of course. You'll be able to plant out the buoys yourselves without help."

"Oh, yes, we'll manage that."

"And for goodness' sake, Whitty, get those boats off the rocks. They're a perfect disgrace to the neighbourhood where they are."

"They'll be taken off to-night," said Dr. Whitty. "There's a spring tide at six o'clock which will float them all, and we have arrangements made for bringing them home."

X

AN INTOLERABLE HONOUR

COLONEL BERESFORD came down to breakfast one morning in September and found a letter from Lord Allington beside his plate. He eyed it discontentedly while he poured out his coffee.

Lord Allington was a nobleman with a high sense of the duties a great magnate ought to perform. It was his custom to invite Colonel Beresford twice every summer to dine and sleep at Allington Castle. Colonel Beresford, too, had a high sense of duty. He always accepted one of the invitations; but — because the dinner parties bored him severely — he always declined the other, finding, year after year, greater difficulty in discovering any reasonable excuse. He suspected that the letter before him contained the second of his two invitations for the current year. His face wore a puzzled frown as he tore open the envelope.

“We are expecting a couple of young fellows,” wrote Lord Allington, “friends of my son’s, to spend next week with us for the shooting. Danton, who is

old Riversdale's right-hand man in the Foreign Office, is also coming and bringing his wife. It will be a pleasure to us if you will drive over on Tuesday, dine, and spend the night. I bought a few dozen of hock at poor Fillingham's auction the other day — capital wine, I am told — and I should like to have your opinion on it. What a smash he came! Two hundred thousand, they say, and he got through it in five years. I expect that old grocer of an uncle of his is writhing in his grave. By the way, I am thinking of recommending the appointment of a new J.P. in Ballintra. It would be a convenience to you to have some one to stand between you and that blackguard, Glynn. I was thinking of your friend the doctor. Would he be a suitable man? In my opinion, he deserves a pat on the back for the admirable way he behaved at the Ballintra sports last summer. I understood at the time that it was he who persuaded the local band to play 'God Save the King.' If you think well of the idea, send me a note of his name. I have forgotten it, if I ever heard it. If Tuesday doesn't suit you, Wednesday will be equally convenient to us."

Colonel Beresford read the letter with great pleasure. He had a feeling of warm friendship for the doctor, and was so much gratified that he sat down immediately after breakfast and accepted Lord Allington's invitation. He expressed a pleasure he did not actually feel at the prospect of meeting Danton

of the Foreign Office, and promised to give an unbiased opinion on the merits of the unfortunate Fillingham's hock. He closed his letter with a strong recommendation of Dr. Whitty, whom he held up as a bright example of all a doctor should be. Then, since there was no reason to doubt that the appointment would be made, he walked down to the town to offer his congratulations at once.

He was fortunate enough to meet the doctor in the street.

"I've got a little surprise for you," he said, "a pleasant surprise, and I want to tell you at once how pleased I am."

"Outbreak of typhoid among your servants?" said the doctor.

"No. That wouldn't be a pleasant surprise!"

"It would to me," said the doctor. "You've no idea how agreeable an epidemic is to a doctor, when it occurs among people who have some one behind them to pay the bill. However, if it isn't that, it can't be helped. What is it?"

"I had a letter from Lord Allington this morning. He —"

"He doesn't want the town band to learn 'Rule Britannia,' does he? For if he does he'll have to come over and teach them himself. I am not going to take on a job of that kind again."

"It's nothing of the sort," said the colonel. "The fact is, Lord Allington was so pleased about the 'God Save the King' performance last year that he wants to see you a J.P."

"If that's the only form his gratitude takes," said the doctor, "it's not much use to me. I wouldn't be a J.P. for two hundred a year paid quarterly straight from the Bank of Ireland."

"It's a high honour," said the colonel, who had old-fashioned ideas.

"Come, now, colonel, you can't seriously mean that. I know you're one yourself, and I think it uncommonly self-sacrificing of you to keep it up, but — hang it all! Look at Thady Glynn! You can't call it an honour to be mixed up with that fellow."

"Glynn's only a magistrate *ex officio*," said the colonel. "This is quite a different thing."

"Still," said the doctor, "I hardly fancy myself perched up in the Court House arguing with Thady as to whether it's the policemen or the riotous drunkard who ought to be fined. It's not good enough."

"I regard it as a public duty," said the colonel, "for every one of us —"

"I'm afraid I haven't got that sort of conscience," said the doctor. "I really couldn't be bothered. Why, think what it would mean. Every publican who wanted an occasional licence would be worrying

the life out of me. Every fellow whose heifer had been caught trespassing would send his wife to try and bribe me with a present of some old goose or other. I'd make personal enemies of all the drunkards about the place, and lots of them are patients of mine. I can't do it. If Lord Allington is really as grateful as you say, let him break his leg and send for me to set it. I should like that, but this plan of setting me on to go J.P.-ing about the country doesn't suit me at all."

"I've just written to him," said the colonel, "strongly recommending you, and I make it a personal matter, Whitty, that you accept the position. I'm getting an old man, and I'm beginning to find a good many things tell on me in a way they didn't a few years ago. It would be a great relief to me to feel there was somebody I could rely on — a man like yourself —"

"Don't say another word, colonel. When you put it that way I have no choice. It's all rot, of course, about your getting old. You're good for years and years of scrapping with Thady Glynn yet. Still, since you make a point of it, I won't refuse, if Lord Allington really nominates me."

"Thanks," said the colonel. "And, really, you know, Whitty, it is an honour. I quite feel the force

of all you say about Thady Glynn; still, it's something to know that you are entrusted by your sovereign with the administration of the law of the land."

"I'll try and look at it that way," said the doctor, "when I'm appointed. But I expect, myself, that Lord Allington will think better of it."

"Not at all. The thing's as good as settled already. After he gets the letter I wrote him, he won't hesitate for an hour."

The party at Castle Allington was quite as dull as Colonel Beresford expected. The hock, indeed, turned out excellent and reflected great credit on the palate of the bankrupt Fillingham. But Lady Allington, whom the colonel took in to dinner, growled intolerably about her health. Danton, undoubtedly a valuable man in the Foreign Office, prosed abominably, and failed to see the point of anybody's jokes except his own. It was with a sense of relief the colonel escaped to bed at eleven o'clock. Next morning, after breakfast, Lord Allington led him away to the library.

"I should like," he said, "to have a few words with you about that doctor. Whitty, isn't that his name?"

"You've sent his name up to the Lord Chancellor, I suppose?"

196 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"No. The fact is—I don't, of course, attach any importance to communications of this sort." Lord Allington unlocked a drawer in his writing-table and drew out a letter which he handed to the colonel. "Still, I'm bound to take every possible precaution. You'll quite understand, Beresford, that it wouldn't do. With the way our actions are criticised nowadays, we can't be too careful. But read that letter."

The colonel looked the sheet of paper up and down, and then read:

"YOUR LORDSHIP,—Having heard that it is your intention to make a magistrate of Dr. Whitty, I beg to bring the following fact to your notice. Dr. Whitty is drunk in the evenings as often as he is sober, and, only last night, had to be helped home to his house by Michael Geraghty, the carpenter. If you have any doubt about the truth of this statement, ask Michael. He will bear out every word I say.—Your Lordship's humble servant,

" 'A LOVER OF JUSTICE.' "

"An anonymous letter!" said the colonel.

"Quite so."

"And obviously written in a disguised hand."

"Plainly," said Lord Allington. "And, of course, I attach no weight to it."

"I should hope not. The whole thing is an abominable and malicious slander. I shouldn't won-

der if Thady Glynn was at the bottom of it. He hates Whitty."

"Very likely. Still —"

"Whitty never was drunk in his life."

"Who's this man, Michael Geraghty? Is he a friend of Glynn's?"

"Not at all. On the contrary, he detests Glynn. Geraghty is a friend of the doctor's."

"A friend of the doctor's! Then why do you suppose the writer of this letter refers to him? If Geraghty had been an ally of the other man's, of Glynn's, I could understand it better."

"It is odd," said the colonel, "very odd, but I'm perfectly certain that Geraghty wouldn't stand in with anyone who was slandering the doctor."

"Suppose, then," said Lord Allington, "that you ask this fellow, Geraghty, whether there's any truth in the story. There can't be any harm in doing that. You could do it quietly, you know."

"I shall ask him if you like," said the colonel, "but I know very well what he'll say."

"I shall be delighted to have the story flatly denied," said Lord Allington, "and I'm sure it will be. In any ordinary matter, Beresford, I need scarcely say that your word would be enough for me, but, in a case like this, you will understand that I have to be extremely cautious."

Colonel Beresford went home perfectly satisfied that Lord Allington's anonymous letter was the work of Thady Glynn. He summoned Michael Geraghty to Ballintra House and demanded from him a flat contradiction of the story of the doctor's drunkenness. To his surprise, Michael Geraghty seemed uneasy and inclined to evade the questions which were put to him.

"I wouldn't," he said, "like to be the man who'd say a word against the doctor."

"Tell me straight out at once," said the colonel. "Was Dr. Whitty so drunk the night before last that you had to help him home?"

"If he was itself," said Michael, "he wouldn't be the first."

"Don't shuffle. Give me a plain 'yes' or 'no.'"

"There's many a man," said Geraghty, "that might make a sup too much and nobody would ever think the worse of him after."

"Was Dr. Whitty drunk or was he not?" The colonel's temper was beginning to give way. "I may as well tell you that, if you say he was, I shan't believe you."

"He was." Michael Geraghty spoke without conviction.

"Was drunk?"

"As drunk as anyone you ever seen. Drunk so

that he couldn't walk, nor couldn't talk sense, nor didn't know what you were saying to him, no more than if he was one of them heifers beyond in the field and you reading to it out of a book."

The indictment was definite and complete enough, but it seemed quite plain to Colonel Beresford that Geraghty was lying, lying clumsily and without real pleasure.

"You're a liar, Geraghty," said the colonel, "and you ought to be ashamed of yourself taking money from a blackguard like Thady Glynn and then slandering an innocent man."

"I haven't spoken a word to Thady Glynn this six months," said Michael sulkily, "and I wouldn't touch his money if he offered me the full of my hat of sovereigns."

"I always thought before," said the colonel, "that you were, comparatively speaking, an honest man. I know now that you're a liar and a scoundrel."

"That's a hard word," said Michael, "and, may be, if you knew what you don't know, you wouldn't be so ready with it."

"You deserve it," said the colonel, "for slandering Dr. Whitty, who's always been a good friend to you."

"I would deserve it, if so be I'd done what you say. But it's what I wouldn't do, and nobody but yourself ever drew it down against me that I did."

"You have done it. Even supposing the doctor was drunk, which I don't for a moment believe, you're the last man that ought to publish it. You should have kept it to yourself."

"And so I would, if so be —"

"Don't talk that way to me. What's the good of saying you'd keep it a secret when you're joining in with Thady Glynn to publish it when it isn't a fact?"

"Colonel," said Michael Geraghty, "it's well known that you're a gentleman, and I'll trust to you that what I'm going to tell you will go no farther, for if ever it got out that I told you, there'd be trouble for me, and, what's more, you'd be sorry yourself, terribly sorry, so you would. The doctor was not drunk, no more than yourself this minute."

"I knew that," said the colonel. "Now tell me this. Wasn't it Thady Glynn that set you on to say he was?"

"I'll not say another word, good nor bad."

"You needn't. I know very well it couldn't be anyone else except Thady Glynn."

"I'll say no more. I'll neither say it is nor it isn't. Only, I'll tell you this, and it's my last word. If Thady Glynn was to be hanged to-morrow for putting them stories out against the doctor, he'd die an innocent man."

Colonel Beresford wrote at once to Lord Alling-

ton a brief but emphatic letter. Without attempting a detailed report of his conversation with Michael Geraghty, he made it plain that the charge against Dr. Whitty was entirely baseless.

A few days later he received a visit from Dr. Whitty.

"Colonel," said the doctor, "has anything more been done about making me a J.P.?"

"I expect," said the colonel, "to hear from Lord Allington to-day or to-morrow that he has forwarded your name to the Lord Chancellor."

"I'd be glad if you'd telegraph to him not to do it. I am perfectly ready to act if I am appointed, as I told you the other day, but — well, I don't want to say more than I need about a very unpleasant matter — but it will be better both for you and Lord Allington if my name is withdrawn."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this. If I'm made a magistrate it'll be a public scandal, and will bring disgrace upon the Petty Sessions Court of this town."

"If you're thinking of that ridiculous story about your being drunk, I may tell you at once that I don't believe a word of it, and I am sure Lord Allington doesn't either. I never did believe it for an instant. The only thing that puzzles me about it is the queer way Michael Geraghty behaved."

"I'm not thinking of that story, but of something worse."

"Let's have it, whatever it is," said the colonel anxiously.

"I'd rather not speak about it, but the truth is that my tailor is taking proceedings against me in the County Court for a bill I owe him which I can't pay. It wouldn't look well, colonel — you must admit yourself it wouldn't look at all well for a newly appointed magistrate to be —"

"My dear fellow," said the colonel heartily, "if that's all that's the matter it can easily be settled."

"No, it can't. The bill's close on twenty pounds, and I haven't as many pence."

Colonel Beresford crossed the room to his writing-table and took his cheque-book from a drawer.

"You must allow me, doctor, you really must. The sum is very trifling. We shall regard it as a loan, repayable at your convenience. I wish you'd told me sooner."

"I won't allow you, colonel," said the doctor. "I couldn't possibly. I may never be able to repay you. I — hang it all! I don't want the money."

Colonel Beresford blotted his cheque, folded it up, and pressed it into the doctor's hand.

"I'm glad to be able to do it," he said. "It's a pleasure to me. You're a man I've always liked."

I've regarded you as a friend. I shall be seriously annoyed. I want no thanks. I won't hear another word from you. Go home at once and settle with that rascally tailor. And, let me tell you, I think all the better of you for coming here and telling me straightforwardly about the matter. It would have been awkward. I think Lord Allington might have felt himself in an unpleasant position if this unfortunate business had come on in the County Court immediately after — But we'll not talk about that. Good-bye, doctor. And don't let the thought of that twenty pounds come between you and your sleep. I don't care if I never see it again."

Still shaking the doctor's hand, he pushed him from the room.

Three days later Colonel Beresford received from Lord Allington a bulky envelope. It contained a copy of the last issue of *The Connacht Mercury* and a short letter. The colonel read the letter first:

"MY DEAR BERESFORD,— I send you herewith a copy of the local paper in which I have marked a paragraph in blue pencil. After reading it, you will, I feel sure, agree with me that it is quite impossible for us to place Dr. Whitty on the Commission of the Peace for this county. I cannot blame you for being mistaken about the man. I made the same mistake

myself, allowing myself to be misled by his action in the matter of the performance of 'God Save the King' at the Ballintra sports last year. But we may be thankful that his real character has come to light in time to prevent our making a serious mistake.

"I am, yours very sincerely,

"ALLINGTON."

Colonel Beresford took up the newspaper. There was no mistake about the passage which had roused Lord Allington's anger. It was completely framed in thick blue lines.

"Contributions to the funds of the United Irish League, received through Thaddeus Glynn, Esq., J.P., Chairman and Treasurer of the Ballintra Branch:—

"George Whitty, Esq., M.D., Ballintra, £2, 2s."

A number of other names followed. A couple of priests were credited with ten shillings each. About a dozen other people appeared to have subscribed sums varying from two shillings to sixpence. Dr. Whitty's name came first, and his subscription was much the largest. The Editor had appended a note to the list, in which he pointed out the advantage to the people's cause which would follow the enrolment of men like Dr. Whitty in the National Organisation. "As a professional man," he wrote, "Dr. Whitty's reputa-

tion stands deservedly high. Of his personal popularity there is no need to speak. It remains only to express the hope that he will, in the future, display the active interest in the affairs of the League which his generous subscription shows us he feels."

Colonel Beresford stared at the paper in amazement. He found it, even with the printed statement before him, impossible to believe that Dr. Whitty had handed over the sum of two guineas to Thady Glynn. There must, he felt convinced, be some mistake about the announcement. He put the paper in his pocket and walked down to the doctor's house. He found Whitty filling a medicine bottle with some black drug in a corner of his surgery. An old woman, grumbling in an undertone, sat in a chair near the door.

"Is that you, colonel?" said the doctor cheerfully. "I was expecting you yesterday. Have you only just seen *The Connacht Mercury*? I'll be with you in a minute. Here, Mary, take that bottle home with you and rub it into your legs. Don't go drinking it. It'll very likely kill you, if you do. If you simply rub it in night and morning, the way I tell you, it'll do you no particular harm, and the thought that you have it by you may be some comfort. Now, colonel."

"I suppose," said the colonel, "that this announcement is a mistake."

"Not at all. It's perfectly correct."

"Then it's some sort of joke, though I must confess I don't see the point."

"It's not a joke. It's serious earnest. I can tell you I didn't a bit like parting with that two guineas, and it went through me like a knife when I saw the grin on Thady's face as he pocketed the coins. I felt more like killing him then than I ever did before, and that's saying a good deal."

"Then you really gave it?"

"I did. You drove me to it."

"I?"

"Yes—you and Lord Allington between you. First of all you refused to believe that I was an habitual drunkard, although you had the best possible evidence for it."

"Was it likely that we'd believe an anonymous letter written by Thady Glynn?"

"Thady didn't write that letter. I wrote it myself, and if that miserable ass, Michael Geraghty, hadn't lost his head and gone back on every word I told him to say you would have believed it, and then there'd have been an end of this wretched J.P. business."

"Do you mean to say—?"

"Next," said Dr. Whitty, "instead of accepting my statement that a fraudulent bankrupt is not a proper man to make a magistrate of, you insisted on forcing a cheque for twenty pounds on me. It would

have served you jolly well right if I had handed the whole of it over to Thady Glynn as a subscription to the League from you. But I didn't. I'm a merciful man, and I spared you. Here's your cheque, by the way; and the next time you want to pay a man's debts for him, make sure he owes them before you write cheques."

"But why on earth—?"

"After that," said Dr. Whitty, "there seemed to me only one possible thing to do. I knew that Lord Allington would never appoint a man a magistrate who was mixed up with Thady Glynn and his lot, so I went round to the hotel and handed two guineas to Thady in the presence of a lot of witnesses. Then I went home and wrote a note to *The Connacht Mercury* man, asking him to stick the subscription into a prominent place in his next issue and, if possible, to write a special note about it. You read it, I suppose. He didn't do it at all badly."

"Why didn't you tell me you objected to being a magistrate?"

"I did tell you, but you wouldn't listen to me. You went on arguing about duty and responsibility and things of that kind. You finally put it to me in a personal way that I couldn't refuse. Then, I promised I'd accept the honour—it was you called it an honour, I didn't—if Lord Allington nominated me."

"He never will now."

"I sincerely hope not."

"I can't," said the colonel, after a short pause, "tell him all this story."

"You can if you like," said the doctor. "I don't mind a bit if you do. But I should say myself that he wouldn't believe a word of it if you swore it on a Bible."

"No," said Colonel Beresford, "he wouldn't. Hardly anybody would."

XI

MISS MULHALL'S LECTURE

SHE was a young woman of peculiar but prepossessing appearance, and Dr. Whitty's eyes rested on her with warm appreciation. Her hair, he noticed, was of a blue-black colour, very abundant, wavy, and lustrous. Her face was oval and plump, with a deep dimple in the middle of her chin. Her skin was a warm shade of brown; her eyes narrow, the irises very dark. Her figure, plump like her face, was well formed and delightfully curved. The general effect was heightened by the fact that she was dressed with good taste in clothes which fitted her. She had a gold-rimmed pince-nez, attached by a thin gold chain to a round brooch fastened on the lapel of her coat. Concealed in the brooch was a spring which wound up the gold chain whenever her fingers loosed their hold of the pince-nez. She had a trick of pulling out the chain and then letting it fly back again, very interesting to watch.

"I see," she said, smiling pleasantly, "that I must introduce myself. I am Miss Mulhall."

"I am delighted to see you," said Dr. Whitty.

He spoke the truth; but he also wondered who she was and what she wanted. She was a stranger in Ballintra. He did not think she was a chance traveller driven by some sudden catastrophe to seek for medical advice. She did not look as if there were anything the matter with her, and her face had not that expression of vacuous superiority to her surroundings which marks the faces of all tourists. She had an air of brisk competence, not unlike that of a young woman who, three weeks before, had forced Dr. Whitty to buy a complete outfit of rubber stamps suitable for marking house linen. But Miss Mulhall, who was simply dressed, seemed inclined to get straight to business. The young lady of the rubber stamps was showily shabby and had wasted a lot of time talking about the weather and the scenery. It seemed unlikely Miss Mulhall had come to sell anything.

"You've heard from Lady Claneder, I think," she said.

"No," said Dr. Whitty, "I haven't. I should like to, of course. I'm sure she writes interesting letters; but I don't happen to know her, and I don't expect she would care about starting a correspondence with me."

Miss Mulhall had a small black bag hanging by a chain from her waist. She opened it, took out a notebook, and turned over the pages rapidly.

"There must have been some curious mistake," she said. "Your name is certainly here as one of those to whom literature has been sent in Ballintra."

"Literature," said Dr. Whitty, "is a thing I delight in. Have you read —?"

"The Rev. J. Jackson," said Miss Mulhall, her eyes on the page before her, "Rev. Father Henaghan, Colonel Beresford, D.L., G. Whitty, M.D. Those are the names I was given. I make it a rule to try, in the first instance, to secure the interests of the medical men in the locality in the work of the Guild."

"Quite right," said Dr. Whitty. "But what is the Guild?"

"The Guild of Maternal Education," said Miss Mulhall. "Lady Claneder's Guild. Surely you must have heard of it."

Dr. Whitty's conscience smote him suddenly. He had — the recollection flashed on him — received by post a large bundle of pamphlets a week before. The envelope in which they came bore a monogram made up of the letters G.M.E., surmounted by a coronet, Lady Claneder's coronet, no doubt. Among the printed papers was a letter bearing an address embossed in gold, "Claneder Castle, near Devizes." The letter was lithographed and obviously represented the actual handwriting of somebody, Lady Claneder's, probably. Dr. Whitty, mistaking the whole for a cun-

ninely devised advertisement of some new patent medicine, had thrown the printed matter into the wastepaper basket and thrust the coroneted envelope behind the clock. His eyes wandered to the chimney-piece, and he noticed that half the envelope was sticking out. Miss Mulhall glanced in the same direction.

"As you didn't get the literature," she said, "I had, perhaps, better explain that the Guild of Maternal Education is founded for the purpose of instructing the mothers of the Empire."

"I should almost have guessed that from its name," said Dr. Whitty.

He edged his way over to the chimney-piece and stood with his back against the clock. Miss Mulhall watched him, and it seemed to Dr. Whitty that her eyes twinkled slightly. She let her pince-nez go with a run. She looked peculiarly charming, and Dr. Whitty hastened to offer a propitiatory apology for his last remark.

"A most valuable work," he said. "There is an enormous amount of infant mortality due entirely to the ignorance of mothers. I understand that in the great English cities the percentage —"

"And in Irish rural districts," said Miss Mulhall.

"Of course. It is, I should say, if anything worse in the Irish rural districts."

The majority of the babies who came under Dr. Whitty's observation grew up to be healthy boys and girls, but he felt it desirable to placate Miss Mulhall. The more he looked at her, the more attractive she appeared.

"If subscriptions of ten shillings —" he said.

"I'm not collecting subscriptions," said Miss Mulhall, "but, of course, if you like to make a contribution to the funds of the Guild, after you have listened to our lecturer —"

"I shall take the first opportunity I get of going to hear him," said the doctor. "Where does he lecture?"

"If you had read the letter Lady Claneder wrote you," said Miss Mulhall severely, "you'd know that our lecturer will be here on Monday."

Dr. Whitty felt it would be useless to deny any longer the receipt of the literature of the Guild of Maternal Education. There was only one course open to him which promised any chance of ingratiating himself with Miss Mulhall.

"I need scarcely say," he said, "that I'm delighted to hear it. As a medical man I am painfully aware of the absolute necessity for maternal education in this district. You'd be surprised to hear some of the things I could tell you. Most of the women regard vaccination as a kind of accompaniment of baptism.

There was one the other day who was really distressed because her child died without it. She said —

“The Guild,” said Miss Mulhall, “tries to keep clear of religious controversy of every kind.”

“It’s perfectly right,” said the doctor, “and I’m prepared to back it in every way I can. Just you let me know if I can be of the slightest assistance to your lecturer, and whatever I can do, I will.”

This was apparently what Miss Mulhall wanted. She smiled in the most charming way and went so far as to balance her pince-nez for a moment on the bridge of her nose. Dr. Whitty recognised that this added a delightful piquancy to her appearance.

“The first thing to do,” said Miss Mulhall, “is to obtain the use of the local hall for the accommodation of the lecturer.”

“Father Henaghan is the man to get at for that,” said the doctor. “There isn’t exactly a hall here, but I haven’t the least doubt he’ll lend us the schoolroom.”

“I shall call on him at once.”

“Perhaps,” said Dr. Whitty, “you’d better let me approach him in the first instance. He’s a delightful man, but he’s a little touchy on the subject of Woman’s Franchise.”

“We’ve nothing whatever to do with the Franchise movement.”

“Of course not; but he might think you have.

You're educating women, you know, and nowadays it's impossible to know where that sort of thing will end. I don't mind a bit myself, but Father Henaghan is sure to be suspicious. You can't altogether blame him, can you?"

"If he's that kind of man—" said Miss Mulhall.

"He isn't in the least. Don't let anything I've said give you a wrong impression of Father Henaghan. He's always ready to take his part in any good work that's going. I merely wanted to suggest that it might be as well if I explained things to him a bit before you called."

"Very well," said Miss Mulhall. "I shall go first to the other two gentlemen." She referred to her notebook again. "The Rev. J. Jackson and Colonel Beresford. There's no objection to my calling on them, I suppose?"

"Not the slightest," said Dr. Whitty. "They'll both receive you most courteously. If I were you, in talking to Mr. Jackson I should emphasise the Temperance side of your work. It has a Temperance side, of course?"

"We're not directly interested in total abstinence," said Miss Mulhall.

"Still, you can't do much with a mother when she drinks, can you?"

"Of course not."

"Well, just rub that into Mr. Jackson. In approaching the colonel, you should make it clear that you are working on imperial lines. You said you were, didn't you?"

"We appeal to the mothers of the Empire."

"Quite so. Get the colonel to understand that. He's tremendously keen on empires of every kind. They're a sort of hobby of his. Then, when you come to deliver your lecture —"

"I don't lecture myself," said Miss Mulhall; "I merely make arrangements beforehand for the reception of the lecturer in each locality."

"I'm sorry to hear you say that," said the doctor. "I should have enjoyed listening to you lecturing immensely."

Miss Mulhall's eyes twinkled again, but she took no other notice of the compliment.

"When you are talking to Father Henaghan," she said, "you must get him to promise to give out the lecture in his church on Sunday."

"Certainly," said Dr. Whitty.

"I shall ask Mr. Jackson to do so, too. That is the only kind of advertisement we adopt. As a rule, we find it most effective."

Dr. Whitty went straight to the priest's house as soon as Miss Mulhall left him.

"Good morning, Father Henaghan," he said. "I

came round to have a chat with you about Lady Clander and her Guild. She's a very remarkable woman and engaged on a most important work."

"Is it her," said the priest, "that sent me a lot of books and papers about the proper way of feeding babies?"

"It was," said Dr. Whitty; "but, of course, she didn't expect you to put her advice into actual practice."

"As well as I can make out," said the priest, "she thought —"

"Excuse my interrupting you for one moment," said Dr. Whitty, "but did you read those papers?"

"I did, the most of them."

"Then perhaps you wouldn't mind telling me what was in them."

"A lot of talk, *that's* what was in them. I didn't read the whole of them, but there was one that was about what they call sterilising milk."

"Capital thing that," said the doctor.

"It may be, for them that has time to spend in amusing themselves. There was another about the amount that a child should be given to eat, and the way the most of the people feeds them too much, on account of not knowing the size of their stomachs. My own opinion is that a child will thrive best if you give it as much as you have for it, whenever it cries."

"But then you don't know the size of its stomach, Father Henaghan. After all —"

"I do not. And it's what neither I nor anyone else has any call to know. The only other one I read was about hygienic clothing, and that's foolishness too. The most of us in this country would be thankful enough to have what clothes would keep us warm without bothering our heads about what they were made of."

"Still," said the doctor, "whatever you may think of particular details, you can't deny that, on the whole, it's an excellent work, and I'm sure you'll have no objection to lending the schoolroom on Monday evening to one of Lady Claneder's lecturers."

"Is it to be telling them things to the women of this parish?"

"Exactly. It can't possibly do any harm."

"How do I know that? There's too much going on these times in the way of rising the people's minds about this and that, so that they won't settle down and keep quiet. Anyway, who'd go to the lecture?"

"If nobody goes," said the doctor, "you'll be none the worse off for having it, so I suppose you'll give us the schoolroom."

The discussion ended, as such discussions usually did end, in Dr. Whitty getting what he wanted. He walked down to Thady Glynn's hotel, where Miss

Mulhall was staying, and announced the result of his mission with an air of triumph. Miss Mulhall did not seem so pleased and grateful as he expected. Her face wore a troubled expression.

"Nothing wrong, I hope?" said Dr. Whitty. "The colonel hasn't gone back on you in any way, has he? If he has, I'll go up at once and set the matter right."

"No," said Miss Mulhall. "Nothing could have been nicer than the colonel and Mr. Jackson were. The fact is, that I've just had a telegram from Dr. Quigley to say he's prostrated with influenza."

"Poor fellow," said Dr. Whitty; "but don't allow that to depress you too much. He'll get over it in time. Is he a near relation?"

"No," said Miss Mulhall; "he's our principal lecturer. It's extremely annoying, for now our meeting here will have to be dropped. The whole work will be at a standstill, and Lady Claneder will be greatly vexed."

"I shouldn't like that to happen," said Dr. Whitty. "She's such an admirable woman it would be the greatest pity to upset her in any way. But don't be despondent, Miss Mulhall. Give the lecture yourself. We'll all be just as pleased. In fact, a lecture of that sort — an intimate talk, so to speak, to women about what is, after all, principally women's business — is much better delivered by a woman. There are lots of

little touches, the things which really go home to a mother's heart —"

It struck Dr. Whitty that Miss Mulhall was on the verge of smiling. He stopped abruptly. Miss Mulhall became quite grave again.

"I'm afraid I can't lecture," she said.

"Nonsense," said Dr. Whitty. "Anyone can lecture. All that is required is a little nerve, a touch of enthusiasm, and a thorough knowledge of the subject."

"I should fail in the matter of nerve. The sight of an audience before me —"

"You really must stay here and lecture," said the doctor. "We can't let you go yet. It would be a bitter disappointment to all of us if you were to run away at once. I can easily arrange that there won't be any audience if you'd rather have an empty room."

Miss Mulhall smiled unmistakably this time.

"Besides," she said, "I don't really know anything about the subject. It may seem odd to you that I don't, but the fact is I simply make arrangements for Dr. Quigley, interview the local people, and impress on them the importance of the work. I'm quite ignorant about it myself."

"That doesn't matter," said Dr. Whitty. "Tomorrow is only Sunday. You've got the whole of that day and most of Monday to prepare. Make up those pamphlets of Lady Claneder's. They'll give

you the entire thing in a few words. Capital pamphlets they are, tersely put, striking, and brimful of sound teaching."

"I thought you told me you didn't get them."

"Father Henaghan showed me his copies," said Dr. Whitty. "I admired them immensely. I can't imagine anything more suitable for the women of this neighbourhood than a synopsis of those pamphlets with the little intimate touches thrown in which you —"

"Perhaps I'd better try," said Miss Mulhall. "But you needn't chase away the whole audience. I shouldn't like to deliver a lecture to you and Father Henaghan with nobody else there."

"Right. I'll see that the room's crammed."

Sunday was a very busy day with Dr. Whitty. He spent it beating up an audience for the lecture. He called personally on more than forty mothers, and urged them strongly not to miss the opportunity of acquiring really valuable information. He dropped in on Miss Mulhall at short intervals with offers of help in the preparation of her lecture. He brought her a large red book on the diseases of children which, he assured her, contained all that was known about measles and whooping-cough. Later on, he called again and told her that he had arranged a plan for demonstrating the proper way of sterilising milk by means of a spirit lamp and a soda-water bottle. At

about six o'clock in the evening he walked into her room again.

"I don't know," he said, "whether you are thinking of saying anything about hygienic clothing. Lady Claneder is very keen about the subject, and quite rightly. I have just been round with Mrs. Geraghty—she has thirteen children of her own, and the youngest is an infant. She has promised to lend me any clothes you want—by way of illustration, I mean."

"Are they very hygienic?"

"Not at all. Quite the contrary, I fancy. I thought you might like to have them as examples of the way the thing ought not to be done."

On Monday morning he arrived at the hotel while Miss Mulhall was at breakfast.

"I'm sure," he said, "you mean to speak strongly about the popular habit of overfeeding infants."

"There's a pamphlet entirely devoted to that," said Miss Mulhall.

"There is. I read it through from end to end last night—borrowed it from the colonel, you know. I was greatly impressed by it."

"You must have known it all before," said Miss Mulhall.

"Of course; but I never came across it put in such a forcible way. Lady Claneder is a wonderful

woman. You're going to say something on that subject, of course."

"I'm going to begin with that."

"I thought you probably would, so I sat up last night and made a baby's stomach — I mean, of course, a model of a baby's stomach — out of part of the inner tube of a bicycle tyre. It has exactly the cubic content of that of an infant three months old. I thought it would be valuable to you by way of an illustration. I left the valve on, so that you can pump milk or anything else you like into it, and show what happens if you overdo it."

"Don't you think that would be rather a disgusting experiment?"

"Not very," said Dr. Whitty, "and I'm sure everybody would like it."

He called twice more in the course of the day, each time with a suggestion for the improvement of Miss Mulhall's lecture. At seven o'clock he arrived to conduct her to the schoolroom. He found her sitting at a table with a large bundle of manuscript in front of her. His sterilising apparatus, a bundle of the cast-off clothes of Mrs. Geraghty's baby, and the section of the bicycle tyre stood together on the sideboard. Miss Mulhall was in a condition of extreme nervousness.

"I'm dreadfully afraid," she said, "I shall break down."

"Oh no, you won't!" said Dr. Whitty. "I shall be close beside you. I'll take charge of all the apparatus, and the moment you want anything I'll hand it to you."

"That will make me worse."

"Don't think of your audience," said Dr. Whitty. "Think of nothing except your subject. Let it take a grip of you. Recollect that you have an absolutely priceless opportunity of doing a great work. Hundreds of lives may be spared — lives of children who might grow up to be — Are you a Unionist or a Nationalist, Miss Mulhall?"

"I don't know, really. My father used to admire Parnell, I believe."

"Then you're a Nationalist. So we'll say that the children might grow up to be Wolfe Tones, every one of them, if their lives aren't sacrificed at the start by the ignorance of their mothers. Keep that sort of consideration before your mind, and your nervousness will vanish — simply vanish."

"But —" said Miss Mulhall. She paused and looked at Dr. Whitty with a curious deprecating kind of smile.

"Say to yourself," said the doctor, "'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.' Think how

you are engaged in directing the hand to rock right. It's the noblest and most inspiring work —"

Again Miss Mulhall smiled. Dr. Whitty stopped speaking. There was something about her smile which puzzled him, a suggestion which eluded him completely.

"There were fourteen of us at home," said Miss Mulhall, "and I was the eldest. My mother died when the youngest was born."

"And you brought them all up?" said Dr. Whitty.
"Yes."

"Then there isn't a woman in Ireland better qualified than you are —"

"That's just the difficulty," said Miss Mulhall.

"I beg your pardon. I don't quite catch —"

Miss Mulhall laid her hand on the pile of manuscript before her. The smile flickered on her lips again, broadened, glowed. Laughter danced in her eyes.

"I think all this is rather silly," she said. "Don't you?"

Dr. Whitty stared at her. Then, suddenly, he burst into a joyous laugh. He crossed the room, seized Miss Mulhall's hand, and wrung it heartily.

The next day Colonel Beresford met Dr. Whitty outside Thady Glynn's hotel.

"Look here, Whitty," he said, "what did you mean

by insisting on my attending that lecture last night? I never heard such a lot of rot talked in my life."

"It was a capital lecture," said the doctor. "You'd go a long way before you'd hear a better or see a nicer-looking lecturer than Miss Mulhall."

"Oh, the girl was all right; but—own up, now, Whitty—there was no sense in what she said. How the deuce can you expect the women about here to spend their time boiling soda water?"

"They're not wanted to boil soda water. What you allude to was a demonstration of the art of sterilising milk."

"It looked to me a great deal more like boiling soda water. But take another point. You're a sensible man, and you must know quite well that what she said about washing children is perfectly ridiculous. I don't deny that a child ought to be washed occasionally, but she wants to overdo it. There's nothing more wholesome than a little dirt. Take Geraghty's children. I don't suppose they get a bath from one year's end to the other, and I defy you to find a healthier lot anywhere. Or look at my roses. If they weren't mulched with manure—manure, mind you, Whitty, the filthiest thing there is—they'd simply die. It's just the same with children."

"You may abuse the lecture as much as ever you like, colonel, but I won't have a word against Miss

Mulhall in my presence. Not a word. It's better for you to understand that at once. She's a lady I have a very high regard for."

"Oh!" said the colonel, drawing the exclamation out slowly.

"Yes," said Dr. Whitty, "exactly so."

"I apologise," said the colonel. "If I'd known — When did you settle it?"

"Last night, just before the lecture."

"I congratulate you," said the colonel. "I'll go into the hotel now and congratulate Miss Mulhall. If I'd had the slightest idea — But I won't say another word against the lecture."

"You may if you like," said the doctor. "I know that lecture's all tommy-rot just as well as you do. So does Miss Mulhall. In fact, she knows it a great deal better than either of us; and you could hardly say a word she wouldn't endorse. But I must say I think that liquid manure theory of yours rather an exaggeration. By the way, do you happen to know Lady Claneder?"

"I met her once," said the colonel, "at my daughter's house in London."

"The next time you meet her I wish you'd try and get her to wind up her Guild. It doesn't do any actual harm, I suppose, but it's a public nuisance. You can't imagine all I went through working up that lec-

ture before I found out what Miss Mulhall's opinions really were."

"Nothing," said Colonel Beresford, "will stop Lady Claneder, unless she finds by experience that every one of her assistants gets married when she sends them out on tour. That might damp her ardour a little."

DR. WHITTY'S PATIENT

"I CALLED on you this morning," said Dr. Whitty, "about a purely personal matter. But perhaps you're busy?"

"I'm thankful to say," said Colonel Beresford, "that I'm past the age at which men think they can preserve their self-respect only by being busy."

"It has occurred to me," said Dr. Whitty, "since I got engaged to be married to Miss Mulhall, that, though my income is all right for the quiet kind of life we intend to lead, I haven't got the amount of capital ready to hand that I ought to have, if we are to go on a proper honeymoon."

"Some men," said the colonel, "would have thought of that before they got engaged."

Dr. Whitty ignored this remark.

"It seems to me, therefore," he went on, "that it's my duty to get a hold of some ready money. I'm sure I can count on your help."

"If you expect me to become a chronic invalid or poison my servants —"

"Not at all. The idea in my mind —"

"I once offered you a present of twenty pounds," said the colonel, "and you practically threw the cheque back in my face."

"I'm not begging," said Dr. Whitty; "all I want of you is your name as a reference."

"What for?"

"I'm thinking of starting a sanatorium. Hold on a minute — here's the advertisement: 'Nervous Patients' — that, of course, means habitual drunkards; it's put in that way to save unpleasantness for their relatives — 'received in a doctor's house. Bracing neighbourhood. Gravel soil. Personal supervision. References kindly permitted to ——' Then comes your name, and, after it, Father Henaghan's and Mr. Jackson's. I have them both, so as to show that the religion of the patient will be properly attended to, whatever sort it is."

"And what do you expect to make out of that?"

"I shall ask £10 a week," said the doctor, "and, if I light on the right kind of drunkard, I dare say I shall get it."

"Is there much choice? I should have thought they were all rather disgusting."

"There is a choice, of course. The best kind is a young man whose father has made a large fortune honestly, and so clings to the idea of respectability. The son, having been educated expensively, gets into

what is supposed to be good society. There, he acquires habits which — Well, the father, after doing his best for a time, determines to put the young man under control in some rather distant place. That's the really strong point about my advertisement. If you live in the English Midlands, as the man I have in mind almost certainly does, nowhere seems farther off than Western Connacht. I shall get my £10 a week to a certainty if I have the luck to light on a man of that sort."

"I dare say you will," said Colonel Beresford. "I'm told that advertising is the one sure means of making money; and your effort is no more immoral than the rest."

"I'm not quite sure," said Dr. Whitty, "that I understand what you mean. Where does the immorality come in?"

"Well, advertisements, as a rule, lie like Ananias and Sapphira. Yours, for instance, says 'Bracing neighbourhood.'"

"That's not a lie. It's simply a formula, like 'Dear Sir' at the beginning of a letter."

"'Gravel soil,' then, is like 'very sincerely yours'?"

"Precisely, and the rest of the advertisement is true."

"Considering," said the colonel, "that every shop

in Ballintra except one is a public-house, it seems to me it would have been wiser to have aimed at some other kind of patient."

"I might have done that, of course; but a drunkard is much the most likely sort to get."

"He'll need a good deal of 'personal supervision,'" said the colonel.

"I don't mean to be the person who supervises. I couldn't spare the time."

"Ah! You mean to engage a sort of keeper."

"Certainly not. In the first place, those fellows are frightfully expensive and I'm trying to make money. In the next place, men of that sort irritate the patient. What I mean to do is to hire Michael Geraghty's little girl, the eldest one, Molly, who is about fourteen. I can get her for five shillings a week, and she'll find the greatest pleasure in walking round with the drunkard."

"But she won't be able to stop him drinking."

"Oh yes, she will. You may not have observed it, colonel, but men who drink are invariably kind-hearted and fond of children. Molly will appeal to his better nature. That's part of my system. No man would touch more than he ought while a nice little girl was holding him by the hand."

Ten days later, Colonel Beresford received a letter marked "Private and Confidential."

"Dear Sir,"—he read—"you will, I feel sure, excuse my troubling you, when I mention that I write to make inquiries about the character and position of Dr. Whitty of your town, whose advertisement gives your name among others as a reference. I am particularly anxious to know whether Dr. Whitty is a man of cheerful disposition. It has become necessary, in consequence of a serious nervous breakdown, to secure for my son a period of complete rest and quiet. I think it desirable that he should be under the supervision of a competent medical man, although I trust he will not require actual treatment, and it is absolutely necessary that his surroundings should be bright and cheerful. I shall feel obliged if you will give me your candid opinion of Dr. Whitty, and I shall regard anything you write as strictly confidential.—I am,

"Yours truly,

"J. HATFIELD."

The notepaper bore the name of a firm, "Hatfield & Co., Engineers and Contractors," with a business address; but this was scratched out and "Cedar Lawn, Edenberry, Newcastle-on-Tyne," substituted.

Colonel Beresford replied cautiously. He said he held the highest opinion of Dr. Whitty's personal character and medical skill, absolutely guaranteed his gaiety, and gave it as his opinion that rest and quiet would be obtainable in Ballintra if anywhere in the world. He added, that he did not in any way vouch

for the value of Dr. Whitty's methods of dealing with nervous patients. Three days later, he received a call from Dr. Whitty.

"Thanks, colonel," he said. "Your letter did the trick for me. Old Hatfield is evidently a British merchant of the most superior possible kind. He offered — actually offered — eight guineas a week, and his son is just the kind of man I want."

"Nervous breakdown?" asked the colonel.

"Precisely. The old boy was frightfully nice about it. You could see at once that he is really fond of Herbert — Herbert is the son's name."

"Of course," said the colonel. "It was sure to be."

"He wrote me a long letter and put the whole thing down to Herbert's artistic temperament and the nerve strain which that involved. It appears that he did uncommonly well at Oxford — Herbert, I mean, not the engineer and contractor — and won a prize for writing poetry. Then he went up to London, and there, apparently, things began to get serious, though they'd evidently been bad enough at Oxford, and old Hatfield connects the trouble in some way with the prize poem. Herbert himself is quite willing to try the experiment of placing himself under my care for a while. He is, so his father says, a young man of very amiable disposition who makes friends wherever

he goes. I expect he'll take to Molly Geraghty at once. I dare say I shall have him for as much as three months, and at the end of that time —"

He paused and was evidently engaged in multiplying eight guineas by thirteen, a sum difficult to do without a pencil and a piece of paper.

"You'll be in a position to marry," said the colonel.

"Yes," said Dr. Whitty, when he had finished his sum, "I shall."

A week later Herbert Hatfield arrived, and for some days Colonel Beresford saw nothing of the doctor. He felt a good deal of curiosity about the progress of the new cure for inebriety, and, meeting Michael Geraghty on the road, took the opportunity of trying to find out what was going on.

"I hear," he said, "that Dr. Whitty has engaged your eldest girl as housemaid, Michael. How does she like it?"

"It isn't housemaid she is," said Michael, "nor yet cook."

"What is she, then?"

"I wouldn't wonder," said Michael, "if she's what they call a companion. Anyway, all she has to do is to walk about along with a strange gentleman the doctor has with him, and for that she's getting five shillings a week and her dinner."

"It sounds an easy job."

"You may say that."

"And is he a nice gentleman?"

"As quiet as ever you seen, barring an odd time when his temper would be riz, and, even with that, Molly says she never heard a curse out of him — not what you'd call a proper curse. It was only this morning he said to her, 'Child, there's half a crown for you. Go and buy dolls and sweets,' he says, 'and leave me in peace by myself.' You wouldn't call that cursing?"

"I would not," said the colonel. "I suppose she took the half crown."

"She did, of course. Is it likely she'd vex him worse than he was vexed?"

"Was he vexed?"

"He was. Didn't I tell you he was? The two eyes were starting out of him with the rage he was in, and, with every look he took at Molly, he got worse instead of better."

"Did she go away?"

"She did not. She'd be in dread to do the like; for the doctor said he'd chastise her if ever she let the gentleman out of her sight, and the most of the time she was to be holding his hand, if so be he'd let her."

Colonel Beresford's curiosity was intensely excited

by this account of Herbert Hatfield's dealings with Molly Geraghty. He made up his mind to call on Dr. Whitty and find out further details about the behaviour of the inebriate stranger. He was aware that he was acting in an undignified way by openly pursuing gossip which was not offered to him; but he consoled himself by reflecting that he had not much dignity to lose, and that, in any case, Dr. Whitty had none. He found, as he expected, that the doctor was quite ready to talk freely.

"I'm sorry, colonel," he said, "that I haven't been able to go up to see you since poor Herbert arrived. I simply wasn't able to get away. Molly manages admirably and sticks to him like a leech; but, of course, I'm responsible. Herbert arrived here this day last week, a frightful wreck, face haggard, eyes sunken, hands shaking like what-do-you-call-'em leaves."

"Aspen?"

"Yes, aspen; that's what he said himself. Being a poet, he'd be bound to say something of the sort. I can't recollect ever having noticed an aspen leaf, but —"

"The aspen tree, I believe, is the same thing as a poplar," said the colonel. "But it doesn't grow in this part of the world."

"All I can say is that if its leaves are anything like

poor Herbert's hands they can't be much use to it. His body was frightfully emaciated."

"Nose red?"

"No, pale grey. A nose doesn't get red except after a long course. Herbert, apparently, has only been really going it for about a year. Well, I gave him a bit of dinner, and, seeing the state he was in, offered him a bottle of porter. What do you think he said? He had the nerve to assure me that he never touched alcohol in any form. I call that rather a bad sign. I'd rather have a man who owned up frankly. However, I did not say anything, but, as soon as dinner was over, I introduced him to Molly, who was waiting in the hall. He didn't seem as much interested in her as I had hoped. However, he went for a walk and she followed him. The next day the trouble began."

"Ah! At Thady Glynn's, I suppose?"

"No. It's a curious instance of the crafty way these poor fellows go about things; he didn't show the smallest wish to go near the town. He went down and sat on Michael Geraghty's pier and looked at the sea. Molly, of course, sat beside him. At first, he didn't take any notice of her; but, after a while, he inquired why she wasn't at school. From that on, he made a series of efforts to get rid of her. He tried

walking fast, and even running, but Molly is an active child, so he didn't make much by that. Then he tried climbing up rocks and places, where he thought she wouldn't be able to follow him. He soon found out his mistake. A child of that age is an extraordinarily good climber as a rule. Then he fell back on the school idea and made his way up to Michael Geraghty's workshop. He had inquired, of course, from Molly who her father was. He didn't make much by that. Michael listened to all he had to say about the advantages of education for the young and the duty of parents. Then he told Herbert that Molly was half-witted and couldn't be taught anything, so there was no use sending her to school. Herbert apparently didn't believe that. He went off the next day to the schoolmaster and made further inquiries. The master, of course, was prepared to back up anything Michael had said, but somehow he took the matter up wrong. He thought it was Herbert Hatfield who had been accusing Molly of being half-witted, and that Michael had been defending his daughter's reputation."

"I don't blame him," said the colonel. "Nobody would expect a father to be giving away his own child like that to a perfect stranger."

"I dare say. Anyway, he said that Molly was the

smartest girl he had, and that the only reason she didn't go regularly to school was that her education was practically complete.

"That seems to have aroused Herbert's suspicions worse than ever. He went straight up to the Presbytery and asked Father Henaghan to tell him the truth about Molly. Father Henaghan wanted to do the best he could to make things pleasant for Herbert, but didn't know what either Michael or the school-master had told him. He said that, owing to an outbreak of measles among the other Geraghty children, he had strictly forbidden Molly to go to school, hoping in that way to prevent the spread of infection. Herbert then inquired for the school attendance officer."

"Thinking, I suppose, that we had compulsory education in this country?"

"Apparently. When he found out that there was no such person he gave up the idea of trying to get rid of Molly by sending her to school."

"What did he do next?"

"He threatened her with the police," said the doctor. "Molly was frightened at first, and told her father when she went home that night. Michael said she needn't mind, because, even if she was arrested, nothing would be done to her afterwards. He said that you were a magistrate, and generally got your own

way on the Bench, and that you wouldn't send any one to prison for following Herbert Hatfield about, because you were as keen as everybody else on having him properly watched."

"I wish he hadn't said that. I don't like being dragged into this business."

"It's all right," said the doctor. "Molly didn't tell Herbert what her father had said. She simply turned up smiling the next morning."

"Then he tried bribing her," said the colonel. "Michael told me all about that."

"It will be very interesting to see what he does next, now that bribery has failed. In the meanwhile the thing is working out splendidly. He hasn't, to my certain knowledge, had a drop of any kind of drink, except water and tea, since he came here; and he's beginning to fatten already. His hands are not half as shaky as they were at first — Hullo! Here he is."

A minute later Herbert Hatfield, having banged the hall door behind him, entered the room.

"Doctor Whitty," he said, "I must ask you for some explanation of the extraordinary way —"

"My friend, Colonel Beresford — Mr. Hatfield," said the doctor, performing the ceremony of introduction.

The colonel and Herbert Hatfield bowed.

"Perhaps," said Herbert, "I could speak to you in

private for a few minutes, if Colonel Beresford will excuse us."

"If it's Molly Geraghty you want to talk of," said the doctor, "there's not the least necessity for a private interview. The colonel knows all about it and strongly approves —"

"No; I don't," said the colonel.

"Of course you don't," said Herbert Hatfield. "No sane man —"

"Keep as calm as you can," said Dr. Whitty, "and tell us exactly what your grievance is."

"My grievance? I am followed about day and night —"

"Don't exaggerate," said Dr. Whitty. "She goes home at night."

"I'm followed about all day," said Herbert Hatfield, "by a horrid little girl. There she is sitting on the window-sill waiting for me."

Dr. Whitty glanced at Molly.

"She looks to me a nice little girl," he said. "She's quite pretty."

"I don't like her," said Herbert Hatfield; "and, even if I did like her, I shouldn't want to have her always treading on my heels."

"I'll tell her not to do that, if you like."

"Tell her to go away and leave me at peace."

"No, I won't. You are here to be cured of a dan-

gerous and highly objectionable kind of disease, and, in my opinion, Molly Geraghty is doing you a lot of good."

"She's making me worse. I'm going mad. I shall become a raving lunatic if she follows me about any more."

"Not at all. So long as you keep off the whisky, you'll be as sane as any man living."

"Whisky! I never touch whisky."

"Well, gin, or brandy, or rum, or absinthe, or whatever it is you do drink. I expect it's some queer, out-of-the-way foreign spirit."

"I tell you, I don't drink at all, and never did."

"Your father told me," said Dr. Whitty, "that you were a pretty nearly hopeless case of nervous breakdown. If that doesn't mean drink, I don't know what it does mean."

"And do you mean to say that you've set that child on to follow me about in order to prevent my going into public-houses?"

"Exactly," said Dr. Whitty, "and, what's more, the treatment is doing you a lot of good. You couldn't have stood up to me and argued the way you're doing when you came here a week ago. Look at your hands now, man. Are they aspen leaves?"

Herbert Hatfield stretched out one of his hands and stared at it. Then he laughed suddenly.

"By Jove!" he said, "I believe you're right. It is doing me good. I slept last night too: the whole night."

"That's Molly Geraghty," said the doctor.

"All the same," said Herbert Hatfield, "I'm not a drunkard. I'm — it may seem rather absurd to you, but my nervous breakdown really was the consequence of great mental strain. I am engaged in writing — surely my father must have told you that I am a poet."

"If you prefer to call it poetry," said Dr. Whitty, "I don't mind. All I want to impress on you is that Molly Geraghty is the best means I know of getting you well again. So long as she is after you, you can't give way —"

"He means," said the colonel, "that she'll keep your mind off poetry."

"She certainly has done that," said Herbert Hatfield.

"Then stick to her," said the doctor, "or, rather, let her stick to you. And if I were you, I should allow her to hold your hands as you walk about."

Herbert Hatfield stayed in Ballintra for six weeks. After he left, he sent Molly Geraghty a present of an immense doll's house, fully furnished and crowded with inhabitants. Some months later Dr. Whitty made a confession to Colonel Beresford.

"Do you know," he said, "that fellow, Herbert Hatfield, really was a teetotaler after all. I asked his father the question straight, when I was acknowledging his cheque."

"And a poet?"

"I didn't inquire. But I dare say he was. After all, there must have been something to account for the horrid state he was in when he arrived. If it wasn't drink, it's as likely to have been poetry as anything else."

XIII

THE HONEYMOON

DR. WHITTY and his friend Eccles of the Congested Districts Board sat together at dinner in a Dublin hotel. They had a small table to themselves in a corner of the dining-room. Intimate conversation became possible when the waiter had brought them their coffee and ceased to hover round them. Dr. Whitty's marriage was to take place the next morning, and Eccles found a bachelor's delight in placing before him the exceedingly awkward position in which a man finds himself on such occasions.

"You appear to think I'm nervous," said Dr. Whitty, "but you're mistaken. I'm not, in the least."

Eccles smiled maliciously. He thought that his friend's manner displayed every symptom of acute discomfort.

"If," said the doctor, "I was nervous and frightened of the girl, I shouldn't marry her. As a matter of fact, Lucy — that is to say, Miss Mulhall — doesn't

strike me as the sort of girl who would terrify anyone. She's extremely nice and gentle in her manner."

"What you're nervous about," said Eccles, "isn't, of course, the lady; it's the ceremony. I've seen bolder men than you quail at the prospect of standing up unprotected before a large congregation and saying things out loud which, on ordinary occasions, they'd shrink from even whispering."

"After all, what's the ceremony?" asked the doctor. "It's nothing to an operation. I assure you, Eccles, I've seen men face the prospect of the knife without turning a hair. Is it likely I'd funk standing up —"

"They won't give you ether, you know."

"As a matter of fact," said the doctor, after a short pause, "I don't mind the prospect of that part a bit. What I do rather dislike —"

"Ah!" said Eccles, "I thought from your manner there must be something."

"—is the way I shall have to go about as a marked man during the three weeks we've got for our honeymoon. I know the way people—people like you, Eccles—whisper, nudge each other, and then smile in hotels and steamers and railway carriages. You seem to think there's something comic about a newly married couple. I regard that whole attitude

of mind as simply disgusting and unbearably vulgar."

"Why don't you go to some lonely place?"

"There isn't such a thing in the world; and if there was, we'd still have to travel in a public conveyance and stop in beastly hotels before we got there. As a matter of fact, we're going to the Channel Islands — Guernsey or Sark, or one of the others."

"You couldn't have chosen a worse spot," said Eccles. "Tobacco and whisky are cheap, of course, but at this season of the year those islands are full of people on holidays who will have nothing better to do than crack jokes about you — jokes which you will be painfully conscious of."

"I was afraid of that," said Dr. Whitty, sighing. "But what can I do? We must go somewhere. I spoke to Lucy about it, and suggested she should wear nothing but old clothes, with a view to disguising our position, you know."

"You couldn't possibly expect her to agree to that. I don't think it was a fair thing to ask. A honeymoon is the one chance most girls get in their lives of wearing new dresses day after day. It would be absolutely brutal."

"She wouldn't agree," said Dr. Whitty, "though she was awfully nice about it. She said she felt for me so much that if I liked she'd wear old boots. It

appears that somebody — her youngest brother, I think — told her that the one sure way of recognising a honeymoon couple was by the soles of the bride's boots. Do you think that's true?"

"No," said Eccles, "it's not. I don't set up to be particularly expert in these matters, but I should think that anyone with a real eye for newly married couples could judge, not so much by the lady's dresses, boots, or hat, as by the man's manner. You may take my word for it, Whitty, there's something about a young husband — an air of affectionate protectiveness, a mixture of shyness and familiarity, a kind of general appearance of cooing-ness — which couldn't possibly be mistaken, whatever boots the lady wore."

"If that's all," said Dr. Whitty, with an air of relief, "I shall be able to manage all right. I suppose now that if I make a point of travelling in a smoking carriage and putting her into a 'Ladies Only' —"

"If you're going to be rude to your wife, she'll simply turn round and go straight home. No self-respecting girl would stand it."

"I shall explain to Lucy beforehand," said the doctor, "why I'm doing it. She'll understand."

"No, she won't. And I strongly recommend you not to try. Take my word for it, Whitty —"

"You talk," said the doctor, "as if you were a

Turk, and had been married a dozen times or more; whereas you don't really know any more about it than I do, if as much."

"Well," said Eccles, "go your own way; but if it ends in a judicial separation or a permanent estrangement, don't blame me. I've done the best I could to warn you of the risk you're running."

Four days later — they had dawdled on their way in Chester and London — Dr. and Mrs. Whitty crossed the gangway to the deck of the steamer which was to carry them from Southampton to the island of Guernsey. The day was a brilliantly fine one in the middle of July, and there were a good many other passengers. Dr. Whitty eyed them with sensitive suspicion. He secured a comfortable chair for his wife, and placed it on the lee side of the deck under shelter of the entrance to the saloon. He himself stood at a considerable distance from her, and tried to look as if he had little or no connection with her. While the steamer was threading her way among the shipping of the Solent Mrs. Whitty called him:

"George, do come over and sit beside me. I want to talk to you."

By way of giving him confidence, she pushed a foot from the shelter of the rug in which she had wrapped herself. Her boot was undeniably old. It must have been one of the oldest she possessed, for

the leather was cracked along the sewing of the toe-cap. Dr. Whitty glanced at it, and then at his fellow-passengers. None of them seemed to be taking any notice of what he did. He ventured quite close to Mrs. Whitty. She put out her other foot. There was a small patch on the side of its boot. Dr. Whitty looked at it with great satisfaction. The boots formed a striking contrast to the unmistakable newness of everything else which Mrs. Whitty wore. He set up a second deck-chair, and sat down on it cautiously.

The sea, even after the steamer left the shelter of the Isle of Wight, was perfectly calm, and many passengers paced up and down the deck. Some of them glanced at Dr. and Mrs. Whitty, but appeared very little interested in them.

"I really think, George," she said, "that you needn't be so nervous. After all, even if anyone does guess, we've nothing to be ashamed of. We're not doing anything wrong."

"Lucy," he said, "you were just as much annoyed as I was this morning at breakfast in the hotel when those people at the next table looked at us and giggled."

"They were extremely rude. I can't imagine how people can have such bad manners."

"I rather think," said Dr. Whitty, "that I saw them

again at the station just before the train started. I'm nearly sure it was the same man. I hope they're not on the steamer. Hang it! There they are."

A man, perhaps forty years of age, neatly dressed and having a certain air of confident superiority, came on deck. With him was a lady, considerably younger than he was, tall, blonde, and, like her companion, self-satisfied. The man paused for a moment and lit a cigarette. Then he and the lady began to pace the deck together. The slight sway of the steamer was no doubt the reason why she laid a hand on his arm. They passed the Whittys. Their manners, as Mrs. Whitty had observed, were deplorably bad. At the sight of the two deck-chairs side by side the man smiled in a way which struck Dr. Whitty as insolent. The lady giggled slightly and then blushed. Dr. Whitty rose from his chair at once, took up a position at some distance from his wife, and lit a pipe. Mrs. Whitty's boots, when the strange couple passed her again, were prominent.

After pacing the deck until they must have walked at least a mile, the man and his blonde companion stood still and leaned across the bulwarks. Dr. Whitty watched them until he had finished his pipe. Then he went into the cabin. At the end of a quarter of an hour he came on deck again, lit another pipe,

and walked, with an air of detached unconcern, to the place where his wife sat.

"Lucy," he said, "I've found out all about those people. They are a Captain and Mrs. Elphinstone, and they are going to Guernsey. The steward told me that. I found her bag afterwards, and it was labelled for our hotel. I think we'd better stop in Jersey."

"We can't. We've taken our rooms, and, besides, I want to see Guernsey. I don't believe Jersey is half so nice."

"In that case," said Dr. Whitty, "I must do something to divert their suspicions. I can't have those two grinning at us every morning at breakfast and every evening at dinner. Besides, they'd tell all the other people at the hotel. It would make our stay there perfectly intolerable."

"But what can you do?"

Dr. Whitty made no answer. He stood with his pipe in his hand until it went out. Then he walked across the deck and took up a position close to Captain and Mrs. Elphinstone. They were gazing at the sea. Dr. Whitty also gazed at the sea, holding his smokeless pipe between his teeth.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, after waiting for five minutes in the hope that Captain Elphinstone would look round.

The appeal produced no effect. Dr. Whitty tried again:

"I beg your pardon, sir; but would you oblige me with a match? My pipe has gone out."

He touched Captain Elphinstone's arm as he spoke to make sure of attracting attention.

"Oh! Ah! yes, certainly."

Captain Elphinstone seemed startled by the request, but he put his hand into his pocket and drew out a silver matchbox. Dr. Whitty lit his pipe.

"A lovely day," he said, "beautifully calm."

"Yes," said Captain Elphinstone; "it is."

"Going to Jersey?"

"No. We mean to stop in Guernsey. Do you know the island?"

"Curiously enough I do not. In fact, that is one of my reasons for going there. My wife and I both want to see Guernsey. We've travelled a good deal, and we are particularly fond of islands. In fact, ever since we were married we've made a point of seeing some island or other every summer."

Dr. Whitty noticed with satisfaction that Mrs. Elphinstone began to show some interest in the conversation. She glanced rapidly at her husband, and her face appeared to express a slight feeling of disappointment.

"We visited the Isle of Man ten years ago," said Dr. Whitty.

"Really!" said Mrs. Elphinstone. "I should scarcely have thought from her appearance that Mrs.—that your wife could have been married so long."

"Whitty is our name," said the doctor. "We were married very young—very young indeed. She was little more than a child. But we've always got on capitally. For our second summer we went to Skye. No, Skye was the year after. It was in Bute we took our second holiday. Then we had a very pleasant time in the Isle of Wight the year after that. The next year we made our way to the Scilly Isles. Then we tried the Hebrides—North Uist, you know, and the others. After that we went to the Orkneys, and now we're on our way to Guernsey."

He smiled pleasantly. His stock of islands was running out, and he feared he had not accounted for the whole ten years of married life which he had claimed. He hoped that he had said enough to satisfy the Elphinstones. He tried to count up the islands he had mentioned with a view to finding out how many years out of the ten remained islandless. To his disgust he found that Mrs. Elphinstone was also counting. She was pressing the fingers, first of her left hand,

then of her right, one by one on the wooden rail in front of her, while her lips silently formed the names of the islands which Dr. Whitty had mentioned. She began with the little finger on her left hand. It represented the Isle of Man. The thumb and first finger of her right hand went down for North Uist and the Orkneys. Then she paused. The second finger was poised interrogatively in the air. Dr. Whitty realised that he was three islands short. He threw in another after a short hesitation.

"Last year," he said, "we got as far as Madeira."

Mrs. Elphinstone put down her middle finger and looked at him questioningly. Dr. Whitty's memory failed him hopelessly. He could not think of an eighth island nearer than the Pacific Ocean. Mrs. Elphinstone's third and fourth fingers were still hovering uncertainly above the rail.

"There were two years," said Dr. Whitty, "in which we couldn't manage to get away. The children were young, you know. My wife never could bear to leave them while they were babies. I dare say"—he looked anxiously at Mrs. Elphinstone—"that you sympathise with her."

She blushed. It was the second time that Dr. Whitty had seen her blush. He felt relieved. Her blush was a symptom of embarrassment, and when embarrassed she was not likely to be laughing at him.

Captain Elphinstone, who seemed to find the situation awkward, came to his wife's rescue with a remark.

"Very interesting," he said, "a most original plan for holidays. You're a good sailor, I suppose."

"First-rate," said Dr. Whitty. "So is my wife. I recollect the time we went to North Uist. We crossed in a gale of wind from Glasgow, and —"

"From Oban surely," said Captain Elphinstone.

"Oban, of course. I get confused occasionally between the various islands. It was to Bute we went from Glasgow."

"More likely to have been Greenock," said the captain.

"At all events, we went," said the doctor shortly, "and it blew a gale of wind. My wife and I were the only two passengers who dined that day."

Then, feeling his geography to be weak, and being unwilling to venture upon further reminiscences which might provoke criticism, he bid good-day to the Elphinstones and returned to Mrs. Whitty.

"I think," he said, with an air of complete satisfaction, "that I've put those two entirely off the scent. I explained to them that we have been married ten years."

"Oh, George!"

"So you can put on decent boots to-morrow. Those ones won't be wanted any more. Of course, if you

happen to get into conversation with Mrs. Elphinstone you had better stand over my statement. I told her we had visited all the islands within reach, one island each summer. Recollect that, Lucy, in case she starts talking to you about the Orkneys or any other place of that sort. I don't think she's been to any islands herself, so you are pretty safe in enlarging on the scenery. I also told her that there were two years during which we didn't visit any island. I said that you were unwilling to leave —"

He stopped abruptly.

"To leave what?"

"Your two young brothers, while they were babies. I said that you'd brought them up from their childhood."

"What did you say that for?"

"Well, I hardly liked to mention the whole thirteen — it seemed such a lot. I hope you won't correct my statement. I wouldn't like her to think there were fourteen of you. In fact, if you don't much mind, Lucy, I dare say it will be better for you not to talk to Mrs. Elphinstone at all. She's a vulgar sort of woman."

"That's what I said this morning at breakfast."

"And you were perfectly right. A woman who is capable of giggling in that odious way, just because

she happened to think, quite erroneously, that we were only just married."

"But we haven't really been ten years married."

"She thinks we have now," said Dr. Whitty, "and that's the same thing, so far as she is concerned."

When the steamer arrived at the pier at Guernsey, it turned out that Mrs. Whitty's dressing-bag, a painfully new one, had got mixed up with the luggage of another passenger. It took the doctor some time to recover it. The Elphinstones, whose luggage was forthcoming at once, got a long start and arrived at the hotel first. Dr. Whitty, when he had secured all his belongings, conducted his wife to the room reserved for them. Then he went downstairs, at her request, to get any letters that might be waiting for them. The Guernsey hotel was their first fixed stopping-place, and any correspondence which had followed them from Ireland ought to be waiting for them. He was directed by a waiter to a rack which hung on the wall at the far end of the entrance hall. He observed, without any feeling of suspicion, that Captain and Mrs. Elphinstone were standing together in front of the rack. They looked round as he approached, and Mrs. Elphinstone smiled broadly. Her husband did more than smile. He burst into an immoderate fit of laughter. Dr. Whitty, very un-

comfortable, but unable to guess at the nature of the joke, glanced at the rack. Three letters, fixed behind green tapes, caught his eye at once. They had all been addressed to "Miss Mulhall, 243 Upper Rathmines, Dublin." This had been scratched out and another address substituted: "Mrs. George Whitty, Royal Hotel, Guernsey." Some one — Dr. Whitty suspected his youngest brother-in-law — had put, in red ink, a note of exclamation after the erased "Miss Mulhall" on all three envelopes.

Dr. Whitty took the letters and fled swiftly across the hall. He was aware that both Captain and Mrs. Elphinstone were laughing at him. He even noticed that Mrs. Elphinstone's face was once again deeply flushed. He ran upstairs to his room, entered it, and locked the door behind him.

"There's no use your unpacking, Lucy," he said, "we leave this island at once."

"Why?"

"There's the reason," he said, laying the three letters on the bed. "I saw those confounded Elphinstones reading the addresses and then giggling in the most offensive way. I wish to goodness your people would have had the sense to put those letters into fresh envelopes. They might have guessed there'd be trouble if they simply scratched out your name. And — hang it all! — I told the Elphinstones we had

been ten years married. Would you mind going down and asking when the next steamer leaves? I really daren't venture out of the room. I should be absolutely certain to meet them again. They'll be lying in wait for me. If there is a steamer in the middle of the night, we'll take it in preference to any other. I should like, if possible, to get off while the Elphinstones are in bed."

Mrs. Whitty left the room at once; she even left it hurriedly. Dr. Whitty, if he had been in a mood to reason calmly, might have prophesied a happy married life from this prompt obedience to what must have been an inconvenient command. But Mrs. Whitty was not acting from an unmixed sense of wifely duty. She wanted very much to laugh out loud. She did laugh, to her own great satisfaction, as soon as she got out of earshot of the bedroom door. Nearly half an hour passed before she returned to her husband.

"There's no steamer," she said, "till eleven o'clock to-morrow morning; but it's all right."

"It can't possibly be all right," said Dr. Whitty gloomily. "That ass Elphinstone will grin at me every time he meets me."

"I had a chat with her," said Mrs. Whitty, "and nothing could have been nicer than she was. She told me all you said to them on the steamer."

"All! Do you mean really all?"

"Yes — every word. And I think it was horrid of you, perfectly odious and horrid."

"I had to say something," said Dr. Whitty sheepishly.

"I shouldn't have minded the islands," said Mrs. Whitty, "but I don't see that you need —"

"I couldn't help it. There weren't any more islands, and she was counting up on her fingers. I had to explain the other two years somehow."

"But, anyway, it's all right. She never believed a single thing you said."

"Do you mean to tell me," said the doctor, "that she doubted my word about North Uist and the Orkneys?"

"Yes, she did. You see, she and Captain Elphinstone are only just married themselves. They're on their honeymoon too. Their wedding was a day after ours."

"The day after?" said Dr. Whitty. "Are you quite sure of that?"

"Quite. She told me so herself. They were married in Scotland, and it appears that Captain Elphinstone is nearly as foolish as you are. He's frightfully sensitive about anyone knowing, and — oh, just fancy, George — they were angry at first because they thought that we were laughing at them."

"If you're really certain that it was the day after,"

said Dr. Whitty, "I think we may perhaps stay on here, after all. He's actually in a worse position than I am."

"Much worse," said Mrs. Whitty—"a whole day worse."

"So, if there's any grinning to be done, I'm the one to do it."

"Yes," said Mrs. Whitty, "you are. And she's so nice about the whole thing. I simply love her."

XIV

"LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM"

"THERE'S a man at the door who wants to see you, sir," said Jacobs.

His tone implied a certain scorn of the visitor. All good servants have a contempt for people of a lower class than that to which their masters belong.

"Who is he?" said Colonel Beresford.

He was sitting over the remains of his breakfast. Mrs. Challoner, his daughter, paying another of her rare visits to Ballintra, sat behind the teapot at the other end of the table.

"He says his name is Geraghty, sir."

Jacobs knew perfectly well that the man's name was Geraghty; for he had been acquainted with Michael for years. But he chose to pretend that he did not care to commit himself to any opinion on the subject; preferring to report, impartially, what he had heard.

"If it's Michael Geraghty, show him in here at once. Or—wait a minute, Jacobs,—perhaps you'd better put him into the library."

The colonel was feeling depressed. Life in Ballintra, since Dr. Whitty went on his honeymoon, had

been dull. He welcomed the opportunity of a chat with Michael Geraghty. But he knew that Mrs. Challoner held strong views about the necessity for keeping the lower orders in their proper places. His eyes were on her face when he made the correction of his first order and said that Michael Geraghty should be shown into the library.

“Don’t let my being here interfere with your seeing him in this room,” said Mrs. Challoner. “I have almost finished my cup of tea.”

She spoke resignedly, as one who was prepared to suffer considerable discomfort for the sake of humouring an unreasonable and fractious person. Michael Geraghty was shown in, and the colonel, glancing nervously at Mrs. Challoner, shook hands with him and offered him a cup of tea.

“It’s what I was wanting to speak to you about,” said Michael Geraghty, “is that they have it put out round the town that the doctor’s to be home this day week.”

“That’s quite true.”

“There was some of the boys saying,” Michael went on, “that it would be well that a few of us would be out to meet him when he’d be bringing his young lady back. He was always well liked in the place.”

“That would be a capital idea.”

“It could be,” said Michael, “that they’d be want-

ing to build a bonfire or the like, if so be you hadn't any objection."

"I haven't the slightest."

Michael Geraghty hesitated.

"It was Father Henaghan was saying," he went on, "that it would be an improvement to the demonstration if there was a good committee with yourself on it and the Rev. Mr. Jackson, so as the doctor would know that the people of every kind of religion in the place was glad to have him back amongst them."

"I suppose," said the colonel, "that you want a subscription."

"We was thinking of an illuminated address," said Michael.

"Very well, I'll give you a sovereign."

"What the boys was saying down in the town," said Michael, "was that it would be a grand thing if so be it was pleasing to you to present the address. There'll be a triumphal arch along the end of the street, and a tar barrel under that, with maybe a cart-load of turf or such round about it; and Father Henaghan is willing to lend the table out of the school, and maybe you'd stand on the table with the illuminated address in your hand and say a few words the like of what would be suitable to the occasion."

"I hope," said Mrs. Challoner sharply, "that you'll do no such thing."

The colonel hesitated. He suspected that he would look somewhat ridiculous if he stood on the table in the middle of the street, silhouetted against the blazing tar barrel, very likely dripped on by a damp triumphal arch, and waved an illuminated address in his hand. He was not at all sure, besides, that Dr. Whitty would be pleased at the demonstration.

“Do you think,” he said, “that Dr. Whitty would like all that?”

Michael Geraghty had not seriously considered Dr. Whitty’s feelings. Like other promoters of festivals of honour, he was willing to be content with the conviction that the hero of the occasion ought to be pleased, if he was not. He was quite frank with the colonel.

“I don’t know,” he said, “will Dr. Whitty be pleased; but Father Henaghan was after saying to me last night that Thady Glynn will be terrible vexed.”

This was certainly true, and it weighed with the colonel. He was always pleased to get the better of the truculent publican, and it occurred to him that this aspect of the matter would appeal strongly to Dr. Whitty.

“I don’t think,” he said, “that I’ll present the address. Let Father Henaghan do that. But if you’re having a committee, you can put my name on it.”

Michael Geraghty seemed to be well satisfied. He

pocketed his sovereign and went away. Colonel Beresford retired to the library, lit a cigarette, and wrote a letter to Dr. Whitty.

“MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I hope you are having a pleasant holiday and enjoying the scenery of the Channel Islands, which, I have always understood, is delightful. We shall all be glad to see you home again next week. In fact I understand that the popular feeling is to take the form of a mild demonstration. Michael Geraghty, who is organising it, was up with me just now, and speaks of a bonfire, an illuminated address, and a triumphal arch. I suppose the town band will play a tune or two, probably not ‘The Battle Song of King Malachi.’ I hope this kind of thing doesn’t bore you. I suggested to Michael Geraghty that perhaps it might, but he seemed to think that you will be reconciled to the fuss and publicity by the knowledge that Thady Glynn will be greatly annoyed. I feel myself, and I dare say you do too, that it’s worth going through something to make that blackguard feel thoroughly uncomfortable.”

Two days later a telegram, which had been handed in at the Sark post office, arrived in Ballintra.

“Michael Geraghty, Chairman Reception Committee, Ballintra.—Do not waste money on illuminated address. Buy fireworks.—WHITTY.”

Michael took this round to the presbytery and handed it to Father Henaghan.

"The doctor's right," he said, "and it's all our luck that the schoolmaster hadn't finished drawing up the address. If we had it sent off to Dublin we couldn't have got out of it. But the way things is we're all right. It was three pounds we had laid out for the address, and we'll get a fine lot of fireworks for that money."

"You won't be wanting the table out of the school, then," said the priest. "I'm just as glad, for you'd have had it destroyed."

"We will want it," said Geraghty. "If so be there's no illuminated address, there'll be all the more need for yourself to be making some sort of a speech."

"Let the colonel do that."

"The colonel isn't willing," said Michael. "He said he'd be better pleased if you were to do it."

"I won't then. Do you think I'm going to stand on the table in the middle of the street making speeches to the doctor, with every corner-boy in the town laughing at me? You ought to have more respect for your clergy than to suggest such a thing. If you want a speech at all, the colonel is the proper man to make it."

Michael Geraghty went up to Ballintra House and did his best to persuade Colonel Beresford to make the speech. The colonel, the fear of Mrs. Challoner in his mind, refused decisively. Michael Geraghty went home and sat down to consider the advisability

of asking Mr. Jackson to fill the gap. He spent a restless night and got up in the morning without arriving at any definite decision. At eleven o'clock another telegram arrived.

"Michael Geraghty, Chairman Reception Committee, Ballintra.—Understand that band is to play at demonstration. Mrs. Whitty strongly of opinion tunes of a personal character should be avoided. Objects particularly to 'Love's Young Dream.'—WHITTY."

Michael hurriedly assembled the leading members of the band and laid the telegram before them.

"I know the tune well," said Flaherty, the cornet-player, "and a fine one it is. What's more, we have the music of it. Listen to me now, boys."

He whistled the air amid a murmur of applause, and then turned to Michael Geraghty.

"It wasn't that one we were thinking of playing," he said, "but 'Rich and Rare were the Gems she Wore,' on account of the words being suitable for the young lady that's coming all the way across Ireland to be living among us. But I'm not sure now that the other wouldn't be better, seeing as how she and the doctor is only just married. I'll take it on myself to say we'll be able to manage it."

"But," said Michael Geraghty, "the doctor says he particularly dislikes that tune."

“Begging your pardon, Mr. Geraghty,” said Flaherty, “the doctor says no such thing. What he says is that Mrs. Whitty objects to it, which is as good as telling us that only for her it’s the tune he’d be best pleased with himself of any you could give him. It’s the doctor that we’re striving to please and not the young lady. Believe you me, if the band gives out ‘Love’s Young Dream’ in the way it ought—and it’s what the band will do—the doctor will be well satisfied. If he didn’t want that tune played why would he be going to the expense of sending a telegram which can’t have cost him much under one-and-sixpence? Tell me that, now.”

Michael Geraghty could offer no answer to this puzzle. An hour later the band was busy practising “Love’s Young Dream.” Michael himself, coming to a sudden decision about the address of welcome, went up to the Rectory and asked Mr. Jackson to deliver an oration on the occasion. But the rector was no more willing than the priest or the colonel to undertake the task. He explained that he had never done anything of the sort before, and that speaking from a table in front of a bonfire would make him nervous. Michael Geraghty went home and summoned his daughter Molly.

“Is there,” he said, “such a thing as a writing-pen in the house?”

272 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

"There is," said Molly; "why wouldn't there? I have one in my school satchel."

"Bring it here, then, and do you sit down and be writing what I'll tell you."

Molly, who was a very good child, did exactly as her father bade her.

"DR. WHITTY, HONOURED SIR,"—said Michael ("Have you that down? Mind your spelling now, Molly.")—"Your two telegrams to hand and contents noted. This is to let you know that there's trouble over the speech that should be made at the demonstration of welcome to yourself and lady, owing to neither the colonel, nor Father Henaghan, nor the Rev. Mr. Jackson being able, which is what they say, but my own belief is that they could well enough, only they're not willing. If it would be pleasing to yourself and lady to let the occasion pass without a speech, the same being what ought not to be, but we can't help it, it would be a great convenience to your obedient servant

MICHAEL GERAGHTY.

"P. S.—A line by return will oblige."

Then followed a passage not written from dictation:—

"My da bids me write this, hoping it finds you as well as it leaves me.—Your loving friend

"MOLLY GERAGHTY."

This was addressed, stamped, and dispatched at once. A telegram in reply arrived two days later.

“Speech of welcome absolutely essential. Try Thady Glynn.—WHITTY.”

Michael Geraghty showed this message to the colonel.

“You wouldn’t,” he said, “like Thady Glynn to be taking part in the proceedings.”

“I would not,” said the colonel, “but I’d rather he did than make the speech myself. Look here, I’ll tell you what to do. Go to the schoolmaster and get him to write the thing out. Put it in an envelope and hand it to the doctor yourself.”

“I might,” said Michael Geraghty, “and it’s what I’ll have to do at the latter end, but the doctor won’t be pleased. It would be better if we had a proper speech made; but what can’t be can’t.”

Another telegram, this time from London, arrived on the morning of the day previous to that on which the doctor was to arrive.

“Michael Geraghty, Chairman Reception Committee, Ballintra.—Build bonfire opposite door of Imperial Hotel.—WHITTY.”

“It’s wonderful,” said Michael to a member of the town band to whom he showed the telegram; “it’s wonderful the interest the doctor takes in the demonstration.”

“Well he may then, seeing it’s for him it is.”

"I had it settled to have the tar barrel where Thady Glynn would see it," said Michael, "and I'm glad the doctor agrees. It's raging mad Thady is this minute, and he'll be worse before we've done."

The next day was a very busy one for Michael Geraghty. The triumphal arch, which consisted of a long strip of white calico bearing an inscription in green lettering, was stretched across the street, the ends being made fast to two opposite windows. The table was carried down from the schoolroom and placed under the arch, to the great inconvenience of carts which were trying to pass from one end of the town to the other. A space was railed in for the firing of rockets, the idea being to minimise the risk involved in the handling of unfamiliar explosives. The crackers, about four dozen of them, were distributed to a number of small boys who could be relied on to set them off at irregular intervals during the proceedings. The town band, massed under the triumphal arch, just behind the school table, had a final rehearsal of "Love's Young Dream." Michael, assisted by about a hundred young men and boys, brought down a tar barrel from the store behind his house and set it up exactly opposite Thady Glynn's door. The work of piling turf round it and over it began. Then a car was seen driving along the road from Dunbeg.

"Tell that fellow he can't pass, whoever he is," said

Michael; "there's no way for him to get by till we have the turf cleared off the street."

"The Lord save us!" said Flaherty the cornet-player, who was watching the building of the bonfire. "It's the doctor himself that's in it."

Michael Geraghty looked up from his work. Flaherty was perfectly right. Dr. Whitty and his wife sat together on one side of the car. Michael stood for a moment in silent amazement.

"By all that's holy!" he said slowly.

Dr. Whitty jumped from the car and shook Michael warmly by the hand.

"What brings you here at all at this time of the day?" said Michael. "We're not half ready for you."

"We came on by the early train," said the doctor. "The fact is, from the letter the colonel wrote me, and from the one I got from you— By the way, how's Molly?"

"She's well," said Michael, "but she'll be sorry to see you here before your time. It wasn't till the evening that we expected you."

"I know that," said the doctor, "and it was in the evening I intended to arrive; but from the letters you and the colonel wrote I gathered that this demonstration was being badly mismanaged, and I thought I'd better come home in time to run it myself. I hate

to see things bungled. Have you got anyone to make the speech?"

"I have not; but the schoolmaster has it written out, and the capital letters done in red ink, and it'll be given to you when the time comes."

"That won't do at all," said the doctor.

"I don't know how we'll manage then," said Michael, "for neither the colonel nor—"

"I'll see after it myself," said the doctor, "so you can make your mind quite easy. What time is fixed for the demonstration?"

"It was ten o'clock we thought you'd be here."

"That will suit admirably. Let us through now, and then you can go on building your bonfire. We've been travelling all night to get here, and I simply must have a wash and something to eat. I'll be round at ten sharp. What's that you have on the triumphal arch in the way of an inscription?"

"A hundred thousand welcomes," said Michael. "I was in favour of it's being in Irish myself, but there was some of the boys said it was better in English, out of respect for the lady."

"It's upside down anyway," said the doctor. "It's just as well I came back in time to see it set right."

The demonstration was a magnificent success. At a quarter to ten the bonfire was lighted, and blazed, to the great delight of the crowd and the discomfiture

ten o'clock precisely, the signal being given by Michael Geraghty. Colonel Beresford, Mr. Jackson, and Father Henaghan stood in front of the table, facing the crowd. Mrs. Challoner and Mrs. Jackson, moved to curiosity by the unusual nature of the proceedings, secured seats at one of the windows from which the triumphal arch was suspended. The blinds of the upper rooms of Thady Glynn's hotel were drawn down, but Mrs. Glynn and Lizzie were peeping out from behind them. There was a short pause after the explosion of the rockets, and then a loud burst of cheering from the crowd. Dr. Whitty, with his wife leaning on his arm, was seen making his way along the street. Leaving Mrs. Whitty in charge of Colonel Beresford, he mounted the table.

"Ladies and gentlemen—" he began.

A roar of cheers and a dropping volley of exploding crackers interrupted him for some minutes.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began again, "it has fallen to my lot to give verbal expression to the feelings of pleasure with which you welcome me home to your midst—feelings which are already evidenced in the magnificent bonfire which blazes behind me, in the triumphal arch under whose shadow I stand, and—"

"Three cheers for the doctor," said a voice in the crowd.

There was a warm response to the appeal, and a number of crackers were flung, hissing and banging, into the middle of the crowd.

"It is through no wish of my own," the doctor went on, "that I find myself in my present position. There are others"—he glanced at the colonel—"who would have filled more appropriately the place I now occupy."

"Sorra the man in the town we'd rather be listening to than yourself, doctor," said Flaherty, who had the members of the band round him.

"But," said the doctor, "since nobody else has come forward, I feel it my duty to say to you what anybody else would have said. Supposing now that the colonel was standing on this platform at the present minute, or either of the reverend gentlemen I see beside him, or Michael Geraghty, what would they be saying to you? They'd say that only for me there'd never have been the pier built that was built. Isn't that true?"

"It is. It is," shouted the crowd.

"And only for me Michael Geraghty wouldn't have got the money that was due to him for building it, and only for me there wouldn't have been the two fine buoys marking out the channel that's there this minute. Isn't that true?"

"It is. It is."

"Very well," said the doctor. "Those, along with

other things, are the reasons for this splendid demonstration of welcome — a demonstration second to none ever seen in this county — as an expression of the cordial good feeling of all classes and creeds towards Mrs. Whitty and myself."

A loud burst of cheers greeted the conclusion of the speech. Dr. Whitty got down from the table, and was seen shaking hands warmly with Colonel Beresford, Mr. Jackson and Father Henaghan. When the cheers had subsided and the last of the crackers had exploded, Dr. Whitty mounted the table again.

"It is now my pleasant duty," he said, "to thank you, on behalf of Mrs. Whitty and myself, for the enthusiastic welcome you have accorded to us. It is far beyond anything we deserve. The slight services, alluded to by the previous speaker, which I have rendered to the town in the matter of piers, athletic sports, and public meetings are far more than repaid by the splendid reception we have this evening enjoyed. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the proudest moment of our lives. Words fail me when I try to give adequate expression to our feelings. I shall merely add that Mrs. Whitty —"

At this further reference to Mrs. Whitty Flaherty felt that his opportunity had arrived. He put his cornet to his lips and blew the first few notes of "Love's Young Dream." The other members of the

band, though taken unawares, rose to the occasion. They seized their instruments and one by one dropped into their places in the accompaniment with considerable skill. Dr. Whitty stood smiling on the platform until he suddenly recognised the tune. Then he leaped to the ground and seized Michael Geraghty by the arm.

"Didn't I wire to you," he said, "not to have that tune played?"

"It wasn't that way we understood the message," said Michael, "but quite the contrary."

"I distinctly said there were to be no personal tunes played, and this one is personal. Under the circumstances it's disgustingly personal."

"What we did was for the best," said Michael.

"Come now," said the colonel, laying his hand on the doctor's shoulder, "you can't deny that it's rather appropriate."

"That's exactly what I'm complaining of. It's sickeningly appropriate. At least you all think it is. That's what's so horribly vulgar about playing it. As a matter of fact, we're not that kind of people at all, either of us. We dislike that sort of thing intensely. Listen to them now."

The crowd, moved to enthusiasm by the strains of the band, had taken up the song.

"For there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream."

“After all,” said the colonel soothingly, “you married her, you know. You must allow us to give you credit for the usual feelings.”

“Credit!” said the doctor. “Credit! Good heavens, colonel, even if we had what you call the usual feelings, do you suppose we want to bray them out on brass instruments in the middle of the night, beside a bonfire in front of Thady Glynn’s hotel? It’s the most revoltingly indecent exhibition of blatant vulgarity — But there, I’ve nobody to blame but myself. I ought to have come home directly I heard about this demonstration. I might have known. If I’d had a glimmer of common sense, I would have known that there wasn’t a man in Ballintra fit to organise a thing of the sort properly except myself.”

“What we did,” said Michael Geraghty feebly, “was for the best.”

Dr. Whitty refused to be pacified. He took his wife by the arm and led her away. The song followed them down the street, beyond the light of the bonfire, to the door of their house.

“There’s nothing half so sweet in life as love’s young dream.”

“After all,” said Mrs. Whitty, “it was rather nice of them.”

“They may have meant well,” said the doctor, “but

282 THE ADVENTURES OF DR. WHITTY

that kind of sentiment is absolutely nauseating. If I'm ever married again—I mean to say, when the time comes for our silver wedding—I shan't go on any honeymoon. I shall stay at home and organise whatever demonstration of welcome there is to be on proper lines. It's an extraordinary thing how stupid people can be over quite simple affairs when they are left without proper guidance."

THE END

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